Second Draft Screenplay

Based on AGATHA CHRISTIE's

# Murder On The Orient Express

by

PAUL DEHN

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

(Principals in capitals)

### PROLOGUE

In U.S.A.:
The kidnapped Child (female)
The Kidnapper ("Number Two")
His Henchman
The Witness

### MAINPLOT

At Aleppo:
Young British A.D.C.
HERCULE POIROT, detective
MARY DEBENHAM
COLONEL ARBUTHNOT

At Stamboul:
Concierge
Waiter
BIANCHI, Italian Director of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits.
RATCHETT, a rich and sinister American
MCQUEEN, his Secretary
Sundry Porters and Attendants at Hotel and:

On Orient Express

### STAFF

PIERRE, Conductor on Calais Coach
Chief Dining Car Attendant
Driver
Fireman

### FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS

Apart from Arbuthnot, Poirot and Bianchi (already listed) :
MRS HUBBARD
COUNT ANDRENYI, an Hungarian diplomat
COUNTESS ANDRENYI, his wife
PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF
Mr HARDMAN
DR. CONSTANTINE

### SECOND CLASS PASSENGERS

Apart from McQueen and Mary Debenham (already listed) :
HILDEGARDE SCHMIDT
GRETA OHLSSON
MR BEDDOES
FOSCARELLI

At Vincovci:
A mysterious new Passenger (male) in Long-shot.

Before Brod:
A Working Party to clear snowdrift.

FADE IN:

TITLES AND CREDITS
to be designed. As CREDITS END:

FADE OUT.

NOTE: The POST-CREDIT SEQUENCE covers impressionistically and in MONOCHROME the kidnapping and brutal murder of a little American girl in the spring of 1930 - a year whose decor, costumes, hairstyles, car designs, etc. should be scrupulously observed. It will be made obvious that this murder is not the one with which our film is mainly concerned. The tempo should be quick and the atmosphere dark, shadowy, sinister. No dialogue; only natural sounds.

At the end of each "episode" we FREEZE to news-photos showing press-coverage of the crime. These should firmly establish the name of the dead child (DAISY ARMSTRONG) and her parents (SONIA ARMSTRONG and COL. HAMISH ARMSTRONG) but TIGHT SHOTS will ensure that no other names are revealed.

FADE IN:

1 INT. DAISY'S EMPTY CRIB - NIGHT

Beyond the crib, the drawn-back curtains (on either side of a wide-open window) stir in the April breeze; and we glimpse the top of a ladder propped against the outer sill. FREEZE FULL SHOT of this to:

2 PRESS-PHOTO

taken in bright daylight on (Pouf!) flashlight.

3 THE KIDNAPPER

in a black wideawake hat whose brim shadows the upper part of his face. A black kerchief masks his mouth and chin. We PULL BACK as he carefully carries DAISY (asleep, but clutching a teddy-bear) through:

4 INT. A COMMUNICATING ROOM

In darkness. On a chair beside an adult bed (with bedclothes in disarray) sits a rigid and motionless NURSE on whom we STAY, as Kidnapper with Daisy exits shot. The Nurse is unrecognisably gagged, blindfolded and bound by ropes to the chair in which she helplessly, sightlessly sits. We PAN OFF chair to disarrayed bed, FREEZE and PULL BACK to:

5 PRESS-PHOTO
(Empty) chair and bed by daylight or flashlight.

6 KIDNAPPER CARRYING DAISY DOWN BACK STAIRCASE

to Servants' Quarters below nursery-complex. The stairs themselves and the passage to which they lead are "carpeted" with linoleum, on which the Kidnapper's rubber-soled footsteps squeak. As he moves to open backdoor at end of passage, Daisy half-wakes and drops her teddy-bear with a small, soft thud. We ANGLE DOWN on teddy-bear, FREEZE and CUT TO:

7 QUICK FLASH: PRESS-PHOTO OF DROPPED TEDDY-BEAR

8 MANSERVANT OPENING KITCHEN SIDE-DOOR

He suspiciously enters passage, unrecognisably silhouetted against backlight from kitchen, where a female COOK is putting back jars on a shelf in unfocused B.G.

9 RECEDING KIDNAPPER

carrying Daisy through open backdoor into courtyard, where an empty car waits silently. In MEDIUM LONG SHOT on the far side of the courtyard is a dimly lit gazebo where two potential witnesses (a MAN embracing a MAID) are witnessing nothing but each other. The Man gently removes the Maid's white-streamered cap and strokes her hair.

10 Near inner threshold of backdoor, Manservant has spotted the teddy-bear (only) and stoops to pick it up. As he straightens:

SHOCK-CUT TO

11 HAND-HELD RUBBER COSH

thudding into the nape of Manservant's neck. As Manservant falls out of LOWER FRAME, we TRACK FORWARD behind a HENCHMAN pocketing the cosh, opening the rear car-door for Kidnapper with Daisy and leaping into the driver's seat to start the car which jerks out of shot. The Man and the Maid in the gazebo break and react.

12 GETAWAY CAR STREAKING UP DRIVE

As it nears massive Main Gates, we see the headlight-beams of a second (o.s.) car approaching Gates from the highway. Getaway car and chauffeur-driven Cadillac almost collide in gateway. But the getaway car does a screaming right turn on to the highway and begins to recede.

13 INT. BACK OF CHAUFFEUR IN CADILLAC

Just inside gateway. He reverses back on to highway and sets off in pursuit.

14 INT/EXT. CUTTING BETWEEN GETAWAY CAR AND GAINING CADILLAC

At chase's peak:

15 KIDNAPPER

lowers window and aims a machine-gun at Cadillac's tyres. Two bursts ...

16 EXT. CADILLAC

Two hits. Cadillac swerves and crashes into tree, across which we SHOOT TO INCLUDE crashed Cadillac in f.g. as getaway car recedes in b.g. Chauffeur (unidentifiably) staggers out of Cadillac to see ... getaway car vanishing.

17 EXT. SMALL PRIVATE PLANE - DAY

It touches down and taxis to a halt, where REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS throng. Flashlights explode and cinecameras turn as a distraught SONIA ARMSTRONG and Col. ARMSTRONG exit plane. We ZOOM to their grief-ravaged faces, FREEZE and CUT TO:

18 HEADLINE DATED "APRIL 10, 1930"
"ARMSTRONG PAYS RANSOM"

CUT TO

19 HUGE HEADLINE DATED "APRIL 17, 1930"
"DAISY FOUND SLAIN!"

We HOLD INSERT and bring up on SOUNDTRACK (inexplicably at first) the whining of a cold, bitter wind, over:

20 SPECIAL EFFECT: THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE SLOWLY YELLOWS AND MOTTLES WITH AGE

The wind is increasing in intensity, and peaks over:

TIME-DISSOLVE TO

21 INSERT: KID-GLOVED FINGERS

proffering a ticket inscribed to M. HERCULE POIROT for the Bosphorous Ferryboat to Stamboul on December 18, 1935. Over this, as we absorb the five-year time-lapse:

A.D.C.'S VOICE
(loud above the wind)
Your luggage is aboard, Monsieur Poirot ...

CUT TO

22 TWO SHOT: POIROT ACCEPTING TICKET FROM A.D.C.

at foot of Ferryboat's gangway, which signs establish. The young A.D.C. (army greatcoat, swagger-stick) is as obviously British as POIROT (waxed moustaches, white silk scarf, velvet-collared overcoat and bowler hat) is Gallic.

A.D.C. (Cont)
... and here's your ticket for the Ferryboat.

Poirot, pocketing ticket, sees and admires:

23 POV SHOT: MARY DEBENHAM (25-30) PRECEDED BY PORTER

We PAN them to head of gangway where a STEWARD inspects and punches MARY's ticket, as PORTER proceeds with luggage.

STEWARD
Welcome aboard, Mees Deben-ham.

CUT BACK TO

24 A.D.C. POIROT

A.D.C.
My General wished me to repeat his thanks, M. Poirot, for saving the honour of the British Garrison in Cyprus. The Brigadier's suicide was ... opportune.

During this, Poirot's gaze has remained riveted on Mary's soberly striking (and very British) attractions. Now he turns to A.D.C.

POIROT
And in the classic English style. A bottle of claret and a revolver. Anyway the case is closed.

24 Continued

A.D.C.
Are you returning to another?

POIROT
Yes, but without urgency. I intend to spend three days in Stamboul, which I have never visited.

A.D.C.
St. Sophia is very fine.

POIROT
You have seen it?

A small, embarrassed pause. Then:

A.D.C.
No.

The ferryboat siren sounds its 5-minute warning. A.D.C. looks at his watch. Poirot looks up again, admiringly at:

25 POV SHOT: MARY.

looking inscrutably past Poirot at:

26 POV SHOT: COLONEL ARBUTHNOT

approaching foot of gangway: slim, trim, grey-moustached, Harris-tweeded, Burberry-raincoated and still extremely handsome under faintly yellow skin that confirms his former service in India. He carries an old Army hold-all to which we momentarily CLOSE, as he passes Poirot with A.D.C. at the gangway's foot. The hold-all is anciently stencilled:

LT. COL. R. ST. J. ARBUTHNOT
12th. GURKHA RIFLES

ARBUTHNOT proceeds up gangway to deck - from which Mary has vanished.

STEWARD
(punching ticket)
Welcome, Col-o-nel Arboo - Arbut ...
(at last successfully)
Ar-buth-not.

CUT TO

27 A.D.C., POIROT

A.D.C.
(looking again at watch)
Time for you to go aboard, M. Poirot. I hope the weather improves. Anyway the Bosphorous is always calm.

POIROT
You have crossed by the ferry?

Another pause.

No.

As the siren sounds its final summons over the increasing wind:

CUT TO

28 EXT/INT. ESTABLISHING SHOTS OF FERRY BOAT UNDER FULL STEAM - (IDEALLY) SUNSET

The choppier the sea, the better. CAMERA MOVEMENT and gusty WIND suggest a slight swell - not slight enough for POIROT (a bad sailor) who emerges looking a little green at the gills. He sways towards the ship's rail, taking two deep breaths of invigorating fresh air. But the third breath he suddenly holds, seeing:

29 POV MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT

Mary and Arbuthnot, leaning over rail.

30 MCU: POIROT'S EYEBROWS LIFT

in surprise not unmixed with admiration. (Quick work!)

31 SAME AS 29

ARBUTHNOT
But, Mary -

MARY
(interrupting)
Not now. Not now. When it's all over. When it's behind us - <u>then</u> ...

32 SAME AS 28

Poirot's eyebrows contract in a puzzled frown, and he moves discreetly away. We TRACK BACK to include Arbuthnot looking sombrely out to sea, and Mary looking at ... Poirot, already out of earshot and receding.

MARY
(unperturbed)
What a funny little man.

ARBUTHNOT
(turning)
Obviously a Frog ...

33 INT. RECEPTION AREA, "TOKATLIAN HOTEL" - NIGHT

Poirot, preceding his luggage, goes first to the CONCIERGE who is Turkish.

POIROT
P - O - I - R - O - T, Poirot.

CONCIERGE
(instantly)
One telegram, Monsieur.

He whips it from its pigeon-hole and hands it (with an ivory paper-knife) to Poirot who opens it. His face falls.

POIROT
(vexedly)
Voila ce qui est embêtant
(to Concierge)
I shall have to leave for London tonight.

CONCIERGE
The Orient Express departs at nine.

POIROT
Can you reserve me a sleeper?

CONCIERGE
Assuredly, Monsieur. That is easy at this time of year. The trains are almost empty. First class or second?

POIROT
First.

33 Continued

CONCIERGE
Even easier. I will get you a ticket to London and reserve sleeping-accommodation in the Stamboul-Calais coach.

POIROT
(sighing)
At least I have time to dine.

He glances up at:

34 POV SHOT: ORNATE CLOCK

Showing 7.50 (p.m.)

CUT TO

35 INT. RESTAURANT, TOKATLIAN HOTEL - NIGHT

sparsely attended. We FOLLOW a WAITER bringing an Oriental silver coffee-pot on an Oriental silver tray with Oriental porcelain cup and the bill to ... whom? He is intercepted, en route, by a plump, white-bearded, beaming gentleman (BIANCHI) who has left his own table to precede the Waiter to ... Poirot's. And Poirot, pushing back a plate of de-skewered Kebab, is in a vile temper.

BIANCHI
Ecco finalmente un amico!
My dear Poirot!

POIROT
(rising)
Bianchi!

They lock in a continental embrace.

POIROT
You have saved me from apoplexy. Sit down.

BIANCHI
(instantly understanding)
You have not dined well.

POIROT
(fingering silver skewer)
The skewers are of better quality than the kebab. The bottle is more distinquished than its wine ...

35 Continued

Waiter pours him coffee, and exits shot.

POIROT
(unpleasurably sipping)
... and the cups show better taste than the coffee. Thank God that I have unexpectedly been called to London. I leave tonight.

BIANCHI
On the Orient Express?

POIROT
How else?

BIANCHI
Evviva! I have a travelling companion!

Over their mutual pleasure:

CUT TO

36 INT. HOTEL RECEPTION AREA

CONCIERGE
I am desolate, M. Poirot, but there is not one First Class sleeping-berth to be had on the entire train.

CUT TO

37 3-SHOT INCLUDING DESPONDENT POIROT AND FURIOUS BIANCHI

BIANCHI
WHAT? In December?

CONCIERGE
(respectful)
In December, Signor Bianchi.

BIANCHI
Has Bulgaria declared war on Turkey? Is there an epidemic in Stamboul. Or a revolution? Are the aristocracy fleeing the country?
(pounding desk)
I am a Director of the Line -

Concierge bows agreement.

37 Continued

BIANCHI (Cont)
- and M. Hercule Poirot is not only a detective of international fame and distinction but he is also my personal friend ...

We have PANNED OFF TRIO to a fat American sexagenarian (RATCHETT) seated nearby in a fur-lined overcoat and holding gloves, hat and stick, as his young secretary (HECTOR MCQUEEN) liberally tips porters, page boys and doormen. At the mention of Poirot's name, Ratchett's small eyes open just a shade wider in his big face. During this:

BIANCHI'S VOICE
(continuing o.s.)
Am I now to understand that there is no First Class accommodation for -

CUT TO

38 TRIO

CONCIERGE
It is incredible, Signor Bianchi, but it is true. There is no accommodation - even for the personal friend of a Director of the Line.

BIANCHI
(to Poirot)
Courage, my friend! We shall arrange something. There is always one compartment - the Number Sixteen - which is not occupied. The Conductor sees to that.

He glances up at:

39 LOW ANGLE POV SHOT: CLOCK SHOWING 8.35

Over this:

BIANCHI'S VOICE (O.S.)
Andiamo! It is time we started.

CUT TO

40 EXT. STAMBOUL STATION-CLOCK SHOWING 8.50

SHOCK-CUT TO

41 EXT. DRAMATIC LOW-ANGLE HEAD-ON CLOSE SHOT THE ENGINE OF THE ORIENT EXPRESS - NIGHT

A Leviathan among trains - illuminated from without by white, incandescent platform-lamps and from within by red-hot fires (now being stoked) which provide the steam that hisses and swirls from a multiplicity of orifices. One such orifice (like a hump on the engine's back) emits a white steam-geyser which jets to the station-roof and triggers off an ear-splittingly whistled five-minute warning to:

42 MASTER-SCENE: EMBARKING PASSENGERS PRECEDED BY THEIR PORTERS

What could be chaos is turned into order by the deft, multilingual proficiency of the Conductor (PIERRE MICHEL) who infallibly routes the rich latecomers to their respective sleeping-compartments, in the following order:

A. The spectacular PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF of indeterminate age but ageless beauty, whose chief protections against the cold are a sable coat, a matching toque, a chenille veil and a three-tier pearl choker. She walks with an ivory-handled ebony stick and leans on the arm of her maid, HILDEGARDE SCHMIDT. (Since Russian Royalty has always conversed in French, it is correct that Pierre should so address her)

PRINCESS
Bon soir, Pierre.

PIERRE
(royal bow)
Mme, la Princesse, mes hommages!
Numero Quatorze.
(less formally)
Fraulein Schmidt, willkommen! Bett Nummer sechs.

B. The young COUNT and COUNTESS ANDRENYI. He, handsome; she, exquisite - and now smilingly extending to Pierre a delicate hand which he deferentially kisses.

PIERRE (in Hungarian)
The Count and Countess Andrenyi are welcome, as always. Number Twelve.

C. MRS HUBBARD looms into shot - so swathed from head to foot in distinctive furs that we can only judge her to be statuesque and guess her to be dignified.

42 Continued

C. PIERRE
Ah, Mrs Hubbard! It is always an honour to greet you. You have your favourite Number Eleven.

D. Mrs. Hubbard nods graciously and pauses in curiosity, as:

Poirot and Bianchi approach.

PIERRE
Ecco. Signor Bianchi! Benvenuto! Numero Nove. Come sempre.

BIANCHI
Thank you, Pierre. You are full up, I hear.

PIERRE
It is unbelievable, Signor. All the world elects to travel tonight.

BIANCHI
(authoritative)
Nonetheless you must find room for M. Poirot here.

PIERRE
M. Hercule Poirot? The famous - ?

His empressement at Poirot's name is succeeded by dismay - doubtless because the train cannot accommodate him.

BIANCHI
Precisely. He is also my personal friend.

Mrs. Hubbard moves on.

E. O.S. FEMALE VOICE (Swedish accent)
Please be so good as to direct -

Pierre turns to see:

F. GRETA OHLSSON (early 30's) clutching her humble, travel-worn suitcase.

PIERRE
Froken Ohlsson, god aften! Plass Nummer Syv.

42 Continued

F. He takes her aside and, speaking inaudibly in the hubbub, points up the platform. She nods, exits shot and we PAN Pierre back to Bianchi and Poirot, as:

G. Ratchett with his American Secretary (McQueen) and British manservant (BEDDOES) arrive within earshot.

BIANCHI
(to Pierre)
My friend has been called urgently to London on a matter of international importance. I have given him my personal assurance that you will secure him accommodation in the coach to Calais.

Ratchett has been looking at the voluble Bianchi with growing impatience. Now he turns to McQueen.

RATCHETT
(pointing stick at Bianchi)
Hector.

Poirot turns to look at Ratchett. Their eyes lock, during:

PIERRE
But, Signor Bianchi, I have already -

MCQUEEN
(approaching)
Forgive me, gentlemen, but Mr Ratchett has reservations and would be grateful if -

PIERRE
(imperturbable)
Ah, Mr Ratchett. Welcome to the Number Ten. Mr Beddoes, the Lower Berth in Number One. And Mr McQueen, the Lower Berth in Number Four.

MCQUEEN
The Upper Berth is vacant?

PIERRE
As arranged.

McQueen tips Pierre and exits shot with Ratchett and Beddoes.

42 Continued

POIROT
This Ratchett has eyes like a toad:
(shivering slightly)
Br-r-r-r!

BIANCHI
(to Pierre)
Come! It is cold. M. Poirot can have the Number Sixteen, which is always kept vacant.

PIERRE
It is taken, Signor ...
(consulting list)
... by a Mr Hardman.

BIANCHI
(exploding)
Who is this Hardman that you shower with forbidden favours? A Grand Duke? A King? An Emperor? A God?

PIERRE
Even worse, Signor. An American.

Bianchi raises clenched fists to heaven.

PIERRE
(placatory)
At Belgrade there will be the slip-coach from Athens.

BIANCHI
(unplacated)
But we do not reach Belgrade till tomorrow night. Must M. Poirot lie among mailbags? Or sleep with the Guard? Is there not a Second class berth free?

PIERRE
There is, but ...

BIANCHI
But what?

42 Continued

PIERRE
It already contains a lady's maid.

BIANCHI
(with heavy irony; to Poirot)
Do you need a lady's maid?

POIROT
Nowadays, very rarely.

Whistles are sounding.

GUARD'S VOICE (O.S.)
En voiture! ... En voiture! ...

BIANCHI
(to Pierre)
Then as a Director of the Line, I command you to place M. Poirot in what we know to be the empty berth above Mr McQueen's Number Four.
(as Pierre bows)
At least you will get two tips.

CUT TO

43 PORTER

Wheeling Poirot's luggage along platform and passing a metal plate affixed to Train's side, labelled:

ISTANBUL - TRIESTE - CALAIS

44 INT. CORRIDOR OF STILL-STATIONARY TRAIN - PIERRE PRECEDING POIROT

Progress is slow because many Passengers are standing outside their compartments. Poirot's thanks consist largely of doffing his bowler hat.

No. 16's door is shut. Outside No. 15, Col. Arbuthnot flattens himself against the corridor window as Poirot passes. Perfunctory recognition is mutual. No. 14 is shut. Outside Nos. 12 and 13 the handsome Count Andrenyi removes an affectionate arm from the waist of his pretty young wife, to give Poirot place. Outside No. 11 the be-furred MRS HUBBARD presents a more substantial obstacle.

44 Continued

An over-blown American widow of relentless garrulity, she has been at vulgar pains to disguise her age, her face and her figure with all the cosmetic camouflage of the 1930's. Despite the precautions of corsetry, her bosom resembles an arrested waterfall. She is mutton dressed as synthetic lamb. God knows (and we shall never see) what she looks like underneath it all.

She opens her compartment door and with difficulty backs into it, as Poirot doffs his bowler-hat, and attempts to pass.

MRS HUBBARD
My second husband, Mr Hubbard, always used to say "Travel broadens the mind, Harriet, but that's no reason why you should allow it to broaden your figure" - so in the end I gave up candy and cream-cakes and pastries and starch and so on and now I'm half the weight I was (well, very nearly half) though my only daughter, Belinda - called after my middle name - always says "Mom, if you even breathe you put on four pounds." Such a lovely girl! When she lets down her hair, it drops right below her knee.

POIROT
(polite desperation)
Indeed, Madame. From where?

She pauses uncertainly - and Poirot thankfully passes the door of No. 10, which is open. Ratchett, already dressing-gowned and finishing his cigar in an easy, button-back chair, again momentarily locks speculative eyes with Poirot. From the doorway of No. 9, Bianchi gives an exhortatory wave.

BIANCHI
Persevere, my friend! It is the last compartment but one.

Pierre precedes Poirot across to threshold to the less opulent Second Class. Outside the closed door of Berths 7 - 8, Mary Debenham gives place to Pierre and to Poirot, who looks puzzled. Ought not she and Arbuthnot to be at least in the same Class and nearer together? Mary merely looks through him. The door of Berths 5 - 6 is shut. Doubtless it houses the German lady's maid. Pierre knocks gently at the door of Berths 3 - 4. As it opens,

CUT TO

45 CLOSE SHOT: HECTOR MCQUEEN

confronting Poirot in doorway. He looks somewhat dismayed as Poirot makes to enter.

MCQUEEN
(American)
Excuse me, but there must be some mistake.
(laborious French)
Je crois que vous avez fait une erreur.

Over Poirot's shoulder, Pierre interrupts from corridor in an apologetic, rather breathless voice:

PIERRE
Mr McQueen, there is no other berth on the train.
(apologetic shrug)
M. Poirot has to come in here.

McQueen's dismay is total. Pierre lowers the corridor window, hauls in Poirot's two suitcases from the porter outside, disposes them on a rack near compartment-doorway, and bows in acknowledgement of Poirot's tip.

PIERRE
Voila, Monsieur. All is arranged. Yours is the upper berth - the No. 4. We start in one minute.

He hurries off down the corridor. Poirot enters.

46 COMPARTMENT 3 - 4

POIROT
I apologise if I have incommoded you. In any case it is for one night only. At Belgrade -

McQUEEN
(brightening further)
Oh, I see. You're getting out at Belgrade.

POIROT
Actually I -

A sudden jerk. Both men automatically move to the window and look out at the long, lighted platform as it begins to slide slowly past them.

CUT TO

47 EXT. REVERSE SHOT: TRAIN MOVING OUT OF PLATFORM

The red light of its rear coach recedes. So does the slow chuffing of its majestic engine. And one by one the white platform-lights dim out and are extinguished. No more trains tonight. The Orient Express has started on its three-day journey across Europe.

FADE OUT SOUND AND VISUAL

THEN, FROM BLACK, SILENT SCREEN, SIMULTANEOUSLY

SHOCK CUT TO

(48 ON SOUNDTRACK: CLANGOUR OF TRAIN AT FULL SPEED

(

(49 ON VISUAL: INT. RESTAURANT CAR - BRIGHT DAY

We shall see that the brightness is reflected from the sunny but snow-covered (T.M.) landscape flashing past the windows.

But we start with TIGHT CLOSE-UP of Poirot's hands holding the cover of a Wagon-Lit menu floridly inscribed:

'DEJEUNER - LUNCHEON - MITTAGESSEN - COLAZIONE"

Over this:

BIANCHI'S VOICE (O.S.)
Better than the Hotel?

The menu is lowered by Poirot, who beams across the coffee-cups at Bianchi.

POIROT
I shall keep it as a souvenir.

BIANCHI
I was anxious when I did not see you at breakfast.

POIROT
My otherwise amiable companion kept me awake with his continual nightmares. Doubtless due to the food at the hotel.

50 TABLE: RATCHETT AND MCQUEEN

Out of Poirot's earshot:

RATCHETT
(draining coffee)
Hector, I ordered three Islamic 13th century perforated-pottery bowls and six beakers. They delivered only five beakers, and one of the bowls arrived chipped - which it was not, when I paid for it ... through the nose. We must send a telegram from Belgrade.

MCQUEEN
(sleepy)
Yes, Mr Ratchett.

RATCHETT
You look tired, Hector.

MCQUEEN
I slept badly.

RATCHETT
Why.

MCQUEEN
(evasive shrug)
The Belgian in the lower berth snored.

RATCHETT
Have we any other unanswered letters on file?

MCQUEEN
Only the anonymous ones.

RATCHETT
And we can't answer those, can we? So go and catch up on some sleep ...
(looking down car)
... before the Belgian gentleman returns to your compartment.

CUT TO

51 TABLE: BIANCHI, POIROT

Poirot's eyes swivel pensively from o.s. Ratchett to:

52 TABLE: FOSCARELLI, HARDMAN, BEDDOES

All obviously pre-graded and placed together by the unerring social judgement of the (intermittently glimpsed) Chief ATTENDANT. McQueen passes them on his way back to his compartment.

FOSCARELLI is a fat, swarthy Italo-American, now dextrously twirling his fork to despatch what must have been a mountain of spaghetti al sugo. HARDMAN is a chain-smoking all-American in a loud suit. (A commercial salesman?) And BEDDOES' supercilious brow is lifted in a British manservant's pained and perpetual disapproval of everything foreign.

HARDMAN
My name's Hardman. Call me Dick.

FOSCARELLI
(between mouthfuls)
Foscarelli. Call-a me Gino.

BEDDOES
Beddoes.

They await his first name.

BEDDOES
Mr Beddoes.

Beddoes looks disdainfully out of the now snow-spattered window.

QUICK LAP-DISSOLVE TO

53 SIMILARLY SNOW-SPATTERED TABLE-WINDOW BEHIND POIROT AND BIANCHI

The daylight could be a little greyer. Bianchi looks away from the window. Poirot looks away from o.s. Foscarelli, Hardman and Beddoes.

POIROT
Ah, for the pen of a Balzac! For three days all these people, these total strangers, converge for different reasons in a single train whose engine controls their destiny.

BIANCHI
Destiny?

53 Continued

Both turn their heads into CAMERA as we PULL BACK to include Count and Countess Andrenyi leaving the car (her hand on his arm) in f.g.: he 30, in impeccable tweeds; she, 22, exquisitely pretty and exquisitely fashionable. (*) After they have passed; Poirot deeply sighs.

BIANCHI
(sympathetically)
I know, I know. We are both envious of the husband.

POIROT
Is he as English as his tweeds?

BIANCHI
God forbid! Count Andrenyi is a hot-blooded Hungarian. If you laid a finger on his wife, he would cease to be a diplomat.

POIROT
And I, with his bullet in my heart, would cease to be a detective.

BIANCHI
Thank God we are not young.

Smoke from the Countess's long cigarette-holder hangs exotically on the air as we

CUT TO

54 O.S. POIROT'S POV: TOBACCO SMOKE SWIRLING AS COL. ARBUTHNOT RISES FROM HIS SINGLE TABLE

We TRACK BACK as he advances, puffing a newly-lit pipe and looking neither RIGHT (Mary Debenham seated with GRETA OHLSSON and Mrs Hubbard) nor LEFT (Princess Dragomiroff). He passes Poirot and EXITS SHOT.

POIROT
Now there is an Englishman from his pipe downwards.
(half to himself)
But why is he alone ... ?

(*) Agatha Christie describes her dress in detail

54 Continued

BIANCHI
(as he waves away pipe-smoke)
It could be said only of Englishmen that where there is smoke there is no fire.

CUT TO

55 TABLE: MARY DEBENHAM, GRETA OHLSSON, MRS HUBBARD

GRETA OHLSSON is a tall, bespectacled, sheep-faced, plaid-bloused, middle-aged Swede with a mass of faded yellow hair unbecomingly arranged in a bun. Mrs Hubbard (as always within everybody's earshot including Poirot's) is glaring balefully at a small heap of unidentifiable change.

MRS HUBBARD
(shrill and plaintive)
My daughter said always to ask for change in sterling or at worst dollars. So for Pete's sake what's a dinar?

GRETA
It is, how do you call it, the currency of -

MRS HUBBARD
(in shrill, plaintive spate)
My daughter also said "Take a book of food-tickets, Mom, and you'll have no problem - no problem at all." Now that just isn't so. First there's this ten per cent tip - five would've done the steward more than justice - and second ...

MARY
(hastily rising)
I think Miss Ohlsson has a headache, Mrs Hubbard. Would you forgive us if we went back to our compartment?

MRS HUBBARD
Willingly, if you must.

We FOLLOW Mary and Greta past Poirot's table. At last Mary gives Poirot a dry little nod of recognition. Greta is too shy to. As they exit shot Bianchi, with a look of growing consternation struggles from the corner seat to his feet.

55 Continued

BIANCHI
(whisper to Poirot)
In the name of charity, release me! Mrs Hubbard is upon us!

Poirot instantly rises to let Bianchi extricate himself from the table, which he does ... only to collide with Mrs Hubbard advancing under full sail. If he says anything, she will interminably answer. So he mimes an apology and flees shot towards his compartment.

MRS HUBBARD
What's the matter with him? Trainsick, or something?

POIROT
Madame, a Director of the Line is never sick of trains. Signor Bianchi greatly resembles the divine Greta Garbo.
(as her eyebrows incredulously lift)
He like to be alone.

Mrs Hubbard sniffs and retreats. Poirot still standing, now has sightlines on:

56 TABLE: PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF, CHIEF ATTENDANT

PRINCESS
(courteous but autocratic and always unsmiling)
At five o'clock you will be sufficiently amiable to place in my compartment a bottle of mineral water and a large glass of Russian tea.

CHIEF ATTENDANT
With lemon but no sugar, Mme. la Princesse.

PRINCESS
Precisely.

CHIEF ATTENDANT
(unfolding and presenting menu)
And for dinner this evening?

56 Continued

PRINCESS
(scanning)
You will have the goodness to serve me a cup of bouillon, the poached sole with one new potato and a small green salad with no dressing.

She closes the menu, hands it back to the bowing Attendant and rises somewhat stiffly with the help of the Attendant and her ebony stick.

PRINCESS
(calling down car)
Hildegarde!

From the far end of the car and black-clad, expressionless HILDEGARDE SCHMIDT, already risen, approaches her mistress in f.g., deftly arranges the sable coat, and guides her down the aisle towards:

57 POIROT, STILL STANDING

As the Princess passes his table, her unsmiling glance catches (with the studied nonchalance of the uninterested aristocrat) Poirot's admiring eye. As the pair exit shot, we STAY on Poirot, whom the Chief Attendant now approaches with his money-box and Poirot's bill. Poirot counts out notes and coins, during:

POIROT
Who was that ... majestic lady?

CHIEF ATTENDANT
Princess Dragomiroff, Monsieur.

POIROT
Ah, I have heard. Her husband realised all his money before the Revolution and invested it abroad. She is a cosmopolitan ...

CHIEF ATTENDANT
(confidential)
... and extremely rich.

Poirot puts bill-money in Attendant's box and waives the change.

CHIEF ATTENDANT
Monsieur is generous. Would all passengers were the same! The American lady refuses

57 Continued

CHIEF ATTENDANT (Cont)
to take her change in dinars. I must try to accommodate her in - what? Coca-Cola bottle tops.

He exits in the direction of the wagon-lit compartments. And Poirot, still standing, looks down the car and finds he is alone except for:

58 POV SHOT ZOOMING DOWN FROM POIROT'S UNOBSTRUCTED EYELINE TO MCU: RATCHETT

Across the empty tables, their eyes lock for the fourth time. Then Ratchett ponderously rises and, smiling with his lips but not his eyes, ambles slowly up the aisle towards ... Poirot, who remains standing.

RATCHETT
(biting end off a big cigar)
Can you oblige me with a light?

Poirot hands him a book of Wagon-Lit matches, which Ratchett takes and (after a pause) pockets unused.

RATCHETT
My name is Ratchett. Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr Hercule Poirot?

POIROT
The pleasure, possibly, Mr Ratchett. The intention, certainly. You asked me for a light. I offered you one. And you have not used it. Even that fool, Sherlock Holmes, could have deduced as much without acute mental exhaustion.

RATCHETT
May I -

POIROT
Sit down? You may.

As both sit:

RATCHETT
In my country, also, we come quickly to the point. Mr Poirot, I want you to take on a job for me. It means big money. Very big money.

58 Continued

POIROT
What is the case - or, as you call it, the "job" which you wish me to undertake?

RATCHETT
Mr Poirot, I'm a rich man. A very rich man. Men in my position have enemies. I have an enemy.

POIROT
Only one?

Ratchett starts, and his face darkens.

RATCHETT
What the hell d'you mean by that?

POIROT
Merely that when a man is in a position to have, as you say, enemies, it does not resolve itself into one enemy only.

RATCHETT
(relaxing)
I appreciate that.

POIROT
Tell me your profession?

RATCHETT
I've retired.

POIROT
From what?

RATCHETT
Business.

POIROT
What sort of business?

RATCHETT
(needled into mockery)
Baby-food.

58 Continued

Poirot's lips form an "O" of surprise, as even the train emits a short, high, astonished whistle.

RATCHETT
(seeing Poirot's scepticism)
It doesn't matter. What matters is my safety.

POIROT
Safety?

RATCHETT
My life has been threatened, Mr Poirot. Anonymously, of course. My secretary, Hector McQueen, can show you two letters on file.
(dipping into pocket)
I can also show you ...this.

"This" is a small automatic. He toys with it idly, during:

RATCHETT
I tote it around by day. I sleep on it by night. M. Poirot - five thousand dollars.

POIROT
No.

RATCHETT
Ten thousand.

POIROT
No.

RATCHETT
Fifteen.

POIROT
Mr Ratchett, I have made enough money to satisfy both my needs and my caprices. Now I take only such cases as interest me; and, to be frank, my interest in your case is ... dwindling.

The train gives a long, shrill, warning whistle. After a pause:

59 OPTION EXT. QUICK CUT: EXPRESS APPROACHING TUNNEL

60 INT. SAME AS 58

WHACK! Darkness slaps down on the dining-car except (we TILT UP) for a weak, pale blue, permanent ceiling-light which is itself obscured by train-smoke drifting in from a barely-opened window-crack. We STAY on the blue light as the rhythmic sound of the wheels re-doubles and reverberates for (say) twelve tense seconds. Dang-dang-dang-DANG! Dang-dang-dang-DANG! Then WHACK! again, as the dining-car clears tunnel into grey daylight and we see that Poirot is sitting alone. We TILT UP to restaurant-car clock showing 3.15 (p.m.) and

CUT TO

61 EXT. BIG LIGHTED CLOCKFACE SHOWING 8.52 NIGHT

We FADE UP changed SOUND EFFECTS and TILT DOWN from clock-face to:

62 PLATFORM-SIGN ESTABLISHING "BELGRADE" STATION

Across the sign bustles Poirot, muffled to the eyes in the intense cold, with a French newspaper under one arm. We PAN him past McQueen, handing the text of a telegram (doubtless about Ratchett's Islamic pottery) to a Post Office COURIER, and END PAN as Poirot approaches Wagon-Lit door of train, where he is accosted by Pierre.

PIERRE
Ah, M. Poirot! I am transferring your suitcases to Number Nine - the compartment of Signor Bianchi, who has moved....
(indicating Bianchi waving from further down platform)
... to the Athens coach.

POIROT
(waving back)
Such generosity deserves my thanks,

POIROT strides towards Bianchi, heavily muffled outside the Athens Coach, whose couplings are even now being checked by Line Engineers.

POIROT
You should not have put yourself to the inconvenience -

62 Continued

BIANCHI
My dear friend, it is more convenient like this. You are going to England, so it is better that you stay in the through coach to Calais. As for me, I am very well here. The coach is empty except for myself and one little Greek doctor. It is most peaceful.
(ominously)
Though the weather, I fear, is not.

63 EXT. PLATFORM

Last-comers clamber aboard. Doors slam. Individual whistles call. A SWEEPER sweeps away snow which the wind has blown on to the platform from outside the shelter of the station.

64 DIFFERENT ANGLE FROM SC. 41: ENGINE'S "HUMP" JETTING STEAM

Through the steam

QUICK TIME DISSOLVE TO

65 INT. TRAIN IN MOTION - PIERRE

sitting in his Conductor's seat warming his mittened blue hands by the stove that in fact heats the whole of the Calais Coach.

POIROT
(approaching)
Good night, Pierre.

PIERRE
Good night, M. Poirot. Sleep well in the new compartment.

POIROT
Who are my new neighbours?

PIERRE
(consulting passenger-plan)
To your right, Monsieur, as you face the compartments, the Swedish lady, Miss Ohlsson shares the Number Seven-to-Eight with the English lady, Miss Debenham. And to your left in No. 10 is ... Mr Ratchett.

65 Continued

Poirot shrugs in vexed resignation. Then, warily:

POIROT
And where is the loquacious Mrs Hubbard?
I would like to get some sleep tonight.

PIERRE
(smothering a smile)
Beyond Mr Ratchett, in the Number Eleven.

POIROT
She is still too near.

Pierre, alert to everything and everyone, looks up towards restaurant-car and sees:

66 POV MEDIUM LONG SHOT: BEDDOES EMERGING AND APPROACHING

with glass on tray. As we PULL BACK to include Pierre and Poirot:

PIERRE
Good evening, Mr Beddoes.

Beddoes graciously inclines his head. As he passes:

POIROT
(to Pierre)
Good night, Pierre.

PIERRE
Pleasant dreams in the Number Nine, Monsieur.

Poirot follows in the wake of Beddoes, who knocks discreetly at the door of No. 10.

RATCHETT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Who's there?

BEDDOES
Only me, sir. Beddoes. With your sedative.

RATCHETT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Come!

Beddoes enters with glass of pink-coloured liquid on tray, leaving door ajar.

66 Continued

We STAY on Poirot, who cannot help being interested. OFF-SCREEN from inside No. 10:

RATCHETT
*How many drops?*

BEDDOES
Of the Valerian? Two, sir. Like you said.

RATCHETT
Put it on the table for later. I want to feel relaxed but not sleepy.

BEDDOES
Precisely, sir.

Beddoes' footsteps re-approach the doorway, in which he will shortly mask Ratchett from Poirot, who begins to slip across towards his new compartment (No. 9) during:

RATCHETT (O.S.)
And tell Mr McQueen I'd like to see the text of the telegram he sent from Belgrade.

BEDDOES
(in doorway)
Very good, sir.

Beddoes exits No.10, shutting door behind him, as Poirot opens the door of No. 9, enters and shuts that, too.

67 PIERRE BY HIS CORRIDOR STOVE WITH CHEF DE TRAIN (GUARD)

who has come for a bodeful consultation with his colleague. They are peering into the night through the corridor window which GUARD repeatedly blows upon and wipes - in a vain attempt to defrost it. Finally he risks the cold by lowering the window. Snow hurtles in, like flung confetti. Guard slams the window shut.

PIERRE
(brushing off snow)
Je me mefie de cette maudite neige.

GUARD
Ainsi du vent, mon ami. C'est une combinaison assez dangereuse. Espérons que nous ne serons pas retenus ...

67 Continued

GUARD (Cont)
(warming hands on
Pierre's stove)
B-r-r! Je meurs de froid!

CUT TO

68 INT. POIROT'S COMPARTMENT

Made up for the night. Poirot, in dapper pyjamas, cleans his teeth with tooth-powder over the chromium tip-up washbasin, tips it shut, (we hear the water gurgling down the waste-pipe) and critically scrutinises in the mirror the condition of his waxed moustaches. A tweak here, a twirl there. Then, from an adjacent drawer, he extracts an object (no longer on our modern market) which resembles a miniature brassiere with a tape on either side: a "moustache-protector". Deftly superimposing its twin "cups" over each side of his moustaches, he connects the elastic tapes behind the back of his neck, erects a travelling-clock on his bedside-ledge (there is a watch-hook for his own watch on the wall above it), hangs his sponge-bag on the hook provided just above (and therefore masking the bolt on the communicating door with No. 10., picks up the French newspaper he bought in Belgrade, and slides gracefully into bed. As he is about to start reading, he hears No. 10's door open.

MCQUEEN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Good night, Mr Ratchett.

RATCHETT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Good night, Hector.

Both voices are muffled but unmistakable. The door of No.10 shuts. As McQueen's footsteps pass Poirot's door and quickly fade, we hear the distinctive CLUNK! of Ratchett's wash-basin being tipped shut and the faint gurgle of water down the waste-pipe behind the party-wall. CAMERA MOVES to include travelling-clock, at which Poirot glances. It registers 10.5.

When reading newspapers alone, Poirot is liable to punctuate his perusal with soft little interjections and expletives apposite to whatever news-item he is reading. He now gives such a bravura performance of this trait that we can almost guess what sort of news-item has prompted each ejaculation.

POIROT
(a rapid, preliminary
leaf-through)
Pfui! ... Aha! ... Zut, alors! ... Ca,
non! ... Tiens, tiens, tiens, tiens, TIENS! ...

68 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
Degoutant! ... Quel ennui! ... Tchk!
Tchk! Tchk! ... etc.

It would appear that all the news is either bad or boring. Poirot reaches the penultimate page, of which we (only) can see:

69 THE OBVERSE: SOCIETY BACK PAGE

containing a large half-tone picture of the pretty young Countess Andrenyi posing with the Count on the steps of St. Sophia. It is captioned: "Le Comte et la Comtesse Andrenyi s'amusent a Stamboul."

As Poirot turns to this back page:

CUT TO

70 MCU: POIROT'S FACE OVER EDGE OF NEWSPAPER

His eyes widen admiringly.

POIROT
La, la!

With finger and thumb he blows a kiss at the picture. Meanwhile the rhythm of the wheels has already changed, and the train is braking to ... a gentle halt. Poirot looks up - a prey to that urge we all feel to peer out of our compartment window and ascertain the cause of the train's stoppage. Luckily the cause is instantly proclaimed by:

STATIONMASTER'S VOICE (O.S.)
Vincovci! ... Vincovci! ...

Poirot yawns, leans back and returns to an increasingly sleepy study of the newspaper.

CUT TO

71 EXT. SHOOTING ALONG PLATFORM (FROM A SIGN ESTABLISHING "VINCOVCI") TO DISTANT REAR OF THE TRAIN - NIGHT

A smaller station, sinisterly lit by lamps past which the snow still blows in a rising wind.

From the distant Guard's Van, a bale of newspapers is flung out on to a platform deserted except for a single PASSENGER, who clambers into a local coach at the very rear of the train, in unrecognisable LONG SHOT. He seems to be wearing a peaked cap. A customs official ...? He slams his door.

QUICK TIME-DISSOLVE TO

72 INT. POIROT ASLEEP, WITH BED-LIGHT ON

A whistle sounds; and the train, jerking into motion, jerks him from his slumbers. Vexed, he retrieves the newspaper and begins to re-study the Back Page. It seems to soothe him ... like the increasing rhythm of the train wheels as the engine gathers force. We CLOSE to TIGHT SHOT: travellers' clock registering 12.10. From clock, we

CROSS-FADE TO

73 EXT. ENGINE-DIAL REGISTERING FULL STEAM WITH FORTISSIMO SOUND-EFFECTS - NIGHT

We PULL BACK to include DRIVER lifting his eyes from the dial to the line ahead.

CUT TO

74 EXT. LOW-ANGLE FRONTAL CLOSE-SHOT: THE ENGINE'S UPPER HALF - NIGHT

Battling thunderously through the driven snow that scuds across the light of its headlamps (which can be out of frame).

75 QUICK ATMOSPHERIC CUTS

- The FIREMAN stokes.

- The red flames roar.

- The Driver grimly looks out sideways and shakes his head at:

76 POV SHOT (HELPFUL, IF PRACTICAL!): WHITE, SNOW-COVERED COUNTRY

whose low hills, as the train passes, seem to undulate up and down, up and down.

CUT BACK TO

77 INT. SIMILARLY ANGLED SHOT: WHITE NEWSPAPER UNDULATING ON SLEEPING POIROT'S FACE

The newspaper rises and falls to Poirot's snores, which are as regular as the rhythm of the wheels. The bed-light is still on.

CUT TO

78 INT. DARKENED NO. 9 - POIROT - NIGHT

He is sleeping peacefully with the bed-light off and the newspaper on the floor, as the wheels of the train brake increasingly slowly to a smooth halt.

Silence - for long enough to make us sure that something is going to happen.

It does. The darkness is suddenly rent by a deep groan which rises rapidly to a cry of stark, unadulterated terror. Poirot, awake in a flash, switches on the bed-light. At the same moment the PING! of a pressed bell sounds from outside, very near. Poirot slips out of bed, slides to his door and holds it slightly ajar, as:

79 FROM POIROT'S POV: PIERRE HURRIES DOWN CORRIDOR TOWARDS CAMERA

and taps at Ratchett's door, above which a light is shining. No answer. Pierre knocks more firmly. PING! A second bell rings. Pierre glances over his shoulder at:

80 FROM PIERRE'S POV: ANOTHER LIGHT SHOWING

over unidentifiable door further down corridor. He knocks louder on Ratchett's door.

VOICE FROM NO. 9 (O.S.)
Ce n'est rien. C'etait un cauchemar.

PIERRE
(obviously relieved)
Ah!
(smiling)
Bien, M. Ratchett. May you now have pleasant dreams.

He scurries off to the second door-light as Poirot, also relieved, re-enters his compartment and sits on the bed. The travellers' clock registers 12.37. But this time some instinct persuades Poirot to compare the time with that on his pocket-watch, which he removes from its hook above the bed. It also registers 12.37. And suddenly Poirot realises that, for the first time on the journey, the silence is so complete that he can hear the travellers' clock (as we can) ticking.

POIROT
(puzzled)
C'est le silence des morts.

80 Continued

He slips off the bed, again, to peer through the compartment window, but it is frosted up. He takes the strap and lowers the window an inch. Snow swirls into the compartment, and he tugs the window shut.

POIROT
(shivering)
Mon Dieu, quelle nuit!

He runs back to bed, switches off the light and buries himself in the warmth of the blankets.

81 INT. ATHENS COACH CORRIDOR PIERRE

nervously knocking at the door of Bianchi's new apartment - softly at first, then louder and louder. (Could Bianchi be the corpse?) At length:

BIANCHI'S VOICE (O.S.)
Che c'e .. ? Avanti!

Pierre enters;

82 INT. BIANCHI'S COMPARTMENT

Its owner is still surfacing reluctantly from deep, contented sleep.

BIANCHI
(unenthusiastic)
Speak.

PIERRE
Signor Bianchi I am desolated to bring you bad news in bed. I regret the train has entered a snowdrift.

Bianchi sits up in wide awake apprehension.

BIANCHI
Impenetrable?

PIERRE
Totally.

BIANCHI
A snow-drift is serious. You were right to have aroused me. Can we send for help?

There is a framed map on the compartment wall, and Pierre uses it during:

82 Continued

PIERRE
Behind us, yes. Someone can go back to the Vincovci signal box, but that would take -

BIANCHI
... a week in this weather, and he would arrive dead. No! Help must come not from behind at Vincovci but from ahead at Brod. When the station-master at Brod sees we have not arrived, he will send help.
(to Guard)
Tell the passengers I will make ...
(swallowing with distaste)
... a personal pronouncement after breakfast. And Pierre?

PIERRE
Signor?

BIANCHI
We have a crisis, and I must face it like a man. Fetch me a glass of mineral water ...

PIERRE
With pl -

BIANCHI
In which you have inserted three measures of brandy.

CUT TO

83 INT. CALAIS COACH - POIROT IN BED - NIGHT

Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick! He cannot sleep. Tossing from side to side, he hears Ratchett moving about next door - a CLICK! as he pulls down the washbasin, the sound of a tap running, a splashing noise, a CLUNK! as the basin is tipped shut again and the water gurgling down the waste-pipe. Then a silence, in which Poirot tries to compose himself.

It is broken by the shuffling footsteps of someone in bedroom slippers, passing in the corridor outside - en route for the W.C. ? Poirot lies staring at the ceiling. Almost at once, from down the corridor, he hears a PING! ... followed impatiently by three, six, nine more PINGS! Whoever it may be is keeping his or her finger on the bell-push. Poirot irritably switches on the bed light and glances at travellers' clock (1.15)

83 Continued

Suddenly, with a rush, running footsteps echo up the O.S. corridor - presumably those of Pierre, who knocks at a door not far from Poirot. We hear it close again - followed by an altercation between a soothing Pierre and an outraged ... Mrs Hubbard.

84 INT. MRS HUBBARD'S COMPARTMENT

Mrs Hubbard is very loud. (There is a reason for this.)

MRS HUBBARD
(furious)
So now there's a man in my room!

PIERRE
(misunderstanding)
Do you want me to go out again, Madame?

MRS HUBBARD
Not you, idiot! I woke up in the dark three minutes ago, and there was a man hiding in this compartment. I sensed it.

PIERRE
(looking around)
Then where could he hide? And how did he get in and out?

MRS HUBBARD
(ignoring this)
What's more I know who he was because ...
(indicating communicating door to No.10)
... I absentmindedly nearly walked through his open door earlier this evening.

PIERRE
(testing communicating bolt)
Leaving the door bolted behind him? On your side?

MRS HUBBARD
"Madam", said this Mr Ratchett, "If you'd done that thirty years ago, I'd have said 'Come in!' " Thirty years ago! Why, I'd only have been ...
(rejuvenatory calculation)
... nine.

84 Continued

As Pierre smothers a smile.

MRS HUBBARD
The man's a baby snatcher.

85 POIROT

rolling his sleepy eyes resignedly.

MRS HUBBARD'S VOICE (O.S.)
(distinct)
I should have sensed it.

PIERRE'S VOICE (O.S.)
(indistinct and softer)
If there should be a re-occurrence ... do not hesitate to ring, Madame.

The door of No. 11 shuts. Pierre's footsteps recede. For about half-a- minute, there is blessed silence as Poirot once more composes himself for sleep.

Then:

Without warning of footsteps: a tremendous THWACK! on Poirot's door, as though someone had lammed it with a sandbag. Poirot leaps out of bed like an infuriated jack-in-the-box.

POIROT
Enfin, c'est le comble!

He flings open the door and, confronting nothing and no-one, looks RIGHT along:

86 POV SHOT: THE DIM-LIT CORRIDOR

Some way down a FIGURE, with her (?) back to us, recedes towards the W.C. - wearing a white Kimono with red dragons on it.

87 POIROT SWIVELS TO LOOK AT:

88 CORRIDOR'S OPPOSITE END

Pierre sits placidly on his little seat by the stove, making entries on large sheets of paper. Everything is deathly quiet.

89 POIROT

simultaneously tapping and shaking his bemused head.

POIROT
Evidemment j'ai une crise de nerfs.

He re-enters his compartment and shuts the door. We PAN OFF door to note that the mysterious Kimono'd figure has now disappeared; and from the darkened corridor, we

CUT TO

90 INT. PIERRE AT HIS SEAT IN FG - BRIGHT DAY

The brightness is reflected from the snow-drifts now clearly visible from the cleaned and defrosted corridor-window beyond him. The train is still stationary.

Beddoes approaches from far b.g., bearing on a tray a glass containing a fluid the colour of Amontillado sherry. He knocks discreetly at the door of Ratchett's No. 10. No reply. He knocks again, louder.

BEDDOES
It's Beddoes, Mr Ratchett. With your pick-me-up.

Silence. Except that we become vaguely aware of the muffled whining of the wind from ... somewhere.

BEDDOES
(knocking at number 10)
Your "Amber Moon", Mr Ratchett.

In b.g. Pierre looks up from his seat. Beddoes tries the door. It doesn't open. He rattles it. It's locked. Pierre has risen and now approaches in case he can be of help. By the door of No. 10 he stops and frowns - not yet noticing that Poirot, spruce and dapper as ever, has emerged from No. 9 for breakfast. Pierre suddenly crouches and puts his ear to the keyhole; then looks up at Beddoes.

PIERRE
The window inside is open.

BEDDOES
(alarmed)
In this weather?

90 Continued

PIERRE
(still crouching)
You can hear the wind.

We can. It rises and falls eerily in minor chords, as it might under the doors and through the keyholes of old houses. Pierre rises to face:

POIROT
(with authority)
Use your pass-key.

Pierre produces his pass-key, inserts and turns it. The door opens an inch (to the loudening of the wind) but is stopped from inside by a chain. Pierre looks at Poirot, who nods. They both rush the door - at first unsuccessfully.

PIERRE
The chain is made not strong - in case of emergency.

At a second attempt the door bursts open.

Let us double or treble the volume of the wind, here, so that it howls like an air-raid siren to convey not only its actual sound but the psychological effect on the three viewers, as we

CUT AND ZOOM TO:

91 POV SHOT FRONTAL MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: RATCHETT'S CORPSE.

The face is already grey and bloodless. The glazed eyes are open in what looks like a drugged glare of anger. A sliver of blood has congealed below his lower lip - no larger than a shaving-cut. His body remains invisible under neatly-tucked bedclothes. Beddoes drops his tray with a CRASH! Pierre stumbles to the window and pulls it shut. As the sound of the wind CUTS OUT:

POIROT
(to Pierre)
Where are Signor Bianchi and the Greek doctor?

PIERRE
(stammering)
In the Dining Car, Monsieur. Signor Bianchi has been telling the passengers about the snow-drift.

91 Continued

This is news to:

POIROT
(eyebrows raised)
Fetch them. At once.

CUT TO:

92 INT. DINING CAR DR CONSTANTINE DETACHEDLY BREAKFASTING WITH BIANCHI ...

... who has no chance to eat. He is the target of a quick-tempo barrage opened by:

ARBUTHNOT
But can't you tap the telephone wires?

BIANCHI
They are down, mon Colonel.

MRS HUBBARD
Or fire a rocket or something?

BIANCHI
This is not a ship, Madame.

MARY DEBENHAM
(calmly)
Where exactly are we?

BIANCHI
Between Vincovci and Brod, Mademoiselle.

FOSCARELLI
But in what - a country?

BIANCHI
Yugoslavia.

ARBUTHNOT
The Balkans! What else can you expect?

GRETA
Snow is God's will and all is for the best.

She burst into floods of tears.

1 92 Continued

MCQUEEN
How long, d'you think, before we -

BIANCHI
As soon as the Stationmaster at Brod sees we do not arrive on time, he will send -

But Pierre is at his elbow, whispering. Bianchi grabs Dr. CONSTANTINE's arm.

BIANCHI
Signori, Signore ! You must excuse me.

As he exits with Doctor:

MRS HUBBARD
He's always excusing himself. It isn't healthy.

HILDEGARDE SCHMIDT
(rising: to no-one in particular)
Ich möchte meine Prinzessin benachrichtigen ...

As she leaves (*), we -

CUT TO

93 INT. CORRIDOR PIERRE SHEPHERDING BIANCHI AND DOCTOR to the shut door of No. 10, which Beddoes guards.

BEDDOES
Mind the broken glass, gentlemen.

Pierre knocks.

From inside Poirot opens the door, momentarily masking corpse.

PIERRE
(announcing)
Signor Bianchi and Dr Constantine.

---

(*) The speakers are the only persons present in the dining-car. Princess Dragomiroff, the Andrenyis and the loud American, Hardman may be presumed to be late sleepers.

93 Continued

Poirot steps aside. Bianchi moves in, but squeamishly hangs back a little. Dr Constantine goes straight to the corpse and stares directly into its still angrily-opened eyes. In fluent English with Greek accent:

DOCTOR
Pupils still slightly dilated. Could have been drugged.

He spots last night's empty valerian glass on the bedside table and is about to pick it up when Poirot deters him. Doctor stoops and sniffs - without touching.

DOCTOR
Was drugged.

POIROT
With what?

DOCTOR
There's a smell of valerian ... which is harmless. But something must have been added. Barbiturate? We can't tell without analysis. May I close his eyes now?

BIANCHI
(uncomfortably, as Poirot nods)
I wish you would.

As Doctor does so, he looks closely at the corpse's grey, waxy, facial skin.

DOCTOR
(puzzled)
But where did he lose so much blood? Can I pull back the bedclothes?

POIROT
By all means. There can be no finger-prints on those.

With professional dexterity, Doctor whips off sheet and blankets. As he does so, CAMERA JUMPS BACK and ANGLES STEEPLY DOWN ON:

94 TIGHT SHOT: TOP SHEET (EXCLUDING CORPSE)

The sheet, to put it mildly, is dappled with bloodstains. Over this:

O.S. DOCTOR'S VOICE
M. Poirot, Mr Ratchett has been frontally stabbed ...
(counting)
... ten, eleven, twelve times.

CUT TO:

95 BIANCHI

begins susceptibly to cough and retch. He is staggering towards the compartment window, when Poirot grabs his arm.

POIROT
Mon pauvre, if you must vomit, please do not vomit to windward but ...
(indicating corridor)
to leeward. Help him, Pierre.

Pierre (himself very shaken) escorts Bianchi into corridor and shuts the compartment door. This leaves Poirot and Doctor alone peering down at (and virtually masking) the exposed corpse.

DOCTOR
There is something in his pyjama pocket.

As he begins to fumble:

POIROT
Permit me.

With a whisked-out handkerchief, he extracts:

POIROT
His watch.

96 INSERT: GOLD POCKET-WATCH ON HELD HANDKERCHIEF

Its casing is savagely dented and, underneath its cracked glass, the hands point to 1.15. Over this:

O.S. DOCTOR'S VOICE
The time of death?

97 SAME AS 95

POIROT
Possibly. I would prefer your objective opinion.

Doctor raises corpse's right arm ... with considerable difficulty.

DOCTOR
There is always an interaction between the temperature of the room
(which in this case
is very cold)
and the onset of rigor mortis. Without my tables, I cannot be precise.

He bends over corpse's head, lifts an eyelid and closely peers.

DOCTOR
The processes of death have begun to neutralise the pupil-dilation.

CAMERA FAVOURS Poirot, watching with exaggerated patience, as Doctor ponders.

At length:

DOCTOR
(briskly)
I think I can say definitely that death occurred between midnight and two in the morning.

POIROT
That would fit. I myself heard him cry out and ring for the conductor, Pierre, at twenty minutes to one. When Pierre arrived, Ratchett apologised and said he had been having a cauchemar - a nightmare. I heard him use his washbasin ... and that is the last thing known.

A knock at the door. Bianchi beckons Poirot out. As they leave, we STAY on Dr Constantine, alone in the compartment. Once more, he turns back the bedclothes, stares closely at the O.S. stab-wounds, frowns and shakes his head in considerable puzzlement.

98 COMPARTMENT NO. 9 POIROT BIANCHI

Poirot is seated, sipping coffee and munching a croissant. Bianchi paces restlessly ... and suddenly stops.

BIANCHI
I beg you!

Poirot, his mouth full of croissant, emphatically shakes his head.

BIANCHI
You cannot refuse!

POIROT
(swallowing)
But it is the duty of the Yugoslavian police -

BIANCHI
(with a snort)
- to question my passengers on my line! To annoy and incommode them. Perhaps to take innocent people off the train ...
(working up)
... and hold them in foul cells and frozen hutments for further interrogation under electric lights! Never! It is for you to solve the mystery. When we get to Brod (if we ever do) we present the Police with a fait accompli. We say: "A murder has occurred. This is the criminal."

POIROT
And if we fail to solve it?

BIANCHI
You? Fail?

POIROT
I have access to no files, no dossiers, no laboratories, no facilities for an autopsy -

BIANCHI
My friend, how many times have I heard you tell me that, to solve a case, a man has only to lie back in his chair and think? Do that! Use, as I have so often heard you say, the "little grey cells" of the brain - and the murderer will be exposed.

98 Continued

POIROT
Your faith touches me.

BIANCHI
(daring to hope)
Then . . . ?

POIROT
I should like to have the Pullman car reserved, for the investigation's Headquarters.

BIANCHI
(beaming)
It is at your disposal.

POIROT
In its private compartment I should like to see hung a plan of the Calais coach together with the names and locations of the passengers who occupy it.

BIANCHI
It is practically hung.

POIROT
And the passports, of all passengers concerned.

BIANCHI
(in transports of delight)
You can even have mine.

They embrace.

BIANCHI
(disengaging)
I will make a public pronouncement.

He leaves (for the dining-car) as Dr. Constantine enters.

POIROT
(to Doctor)
What other passengers are there on the train?

98 Continued

DOCTOR
In the Athens Coach, no-one but myself and Signor Bianchi. Behind that, only the local coach which need not concern us.

POIROT
(sharply)
Why not?

DOCTOR
(smugly)
It is locked every night after dinner.

POIROT
Then, presumably, whoever locked it could have unlocked it. Nonetheless, I agree with you ...
(cautionary hint to Doctor)
... professionally. We must concentrate on the Calais Coach -

DOCTOR
Where, in my amateur opinion, the murderer is with us ... now.

99 DINING CAR - ALL PASSENGERS PRESENT WITH BIANCHI

who has been fending off most of them.

BIANCHI
Patience!

Hubbub. Banging his fist on the table-top with maximum impatience:

BIANCHI
Patience! You will all be called to give your views to M. Poirot - in M. Poirot's own good time.

GRETA OHLSSON
(tearful)
It is not good time. It is bad time. God's laws have been bust.
(tapping her Bible)
"Thou shalt not kill."

99 Continued

MCQUEEN
And why wasn't I called at once, Signor Bianchi? After all, I was his nearest -

MRS HUBBARD
(rising)
And I was nearest to his murderer.

Sensation! Even Pierre, approaching from Wagon-Lits corridor, halts in his tracks on the Dining Car's threshold.

BIANCHI
You mean - you saw the murderer, Mrs Hubbard? You can identify -

MRS HUBBARD
(testily)
I mean nothing of the kind. I mean there was a man in my compartment last night. It was pitch-dark, of course, and my eyes were closed in terror -

BIANCHI
(pleased with himself)
Then how do you know he was a man?

MRS HUBBARD
Because I've enjoyed very warm relationships with both my husbands.

BIANCHI
Always with your eyes closed?

MRS HUBBARD
That helped.

A ripple of amusement from all but Bianchi, Greta and the Princess.

MRS HUBBARD
Anyway, the man smelt of tobacco.

She suddenly sees and reacts to:

100 POV SHOT: PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF

inscrutably lighting a small, thin, black cigar. We PAN to Pierre entering dining car and advancing on McQueen.

100 Continued

PIERRE
Mr McQueen, M. Poirot would be grateful for a few minutes of your time.

MCQUEEN
(snatching up briefcase)
At last.

Bianchi seizes the opportunity to begin following Pierre and McQueen out of dining car. He passes the Princess's table as Mrs Hubbard reaches it in his wake.

MRS HUBBARD
(calling after him)
Don't you agree that the man must have entered my room to gain access to Mr Ratchett?

The Princess looks Mrs Hubbard up and down, and exhales a thin stream of cigar-smoke.

PRINCESS
I can think of no other reason, Madame.

101 WAGON-LIT CORRIDOR

Poirot is just emerging from Ratchett's No. 10, as Pierre arrives outside No. 9 with McQueen. Our detective's manner is now very brisk and professional.

POIROT
(over shoulder)
Give me five minutes, Doctor. And remember! Note everything. Move nothing.
(to Pierre, who shut the door of No. 10)
Pierre, could you discreetly procure me a lady's hat-box - one of the big, old fashioned, multiple kind - perhaps from the Princess Dragomiroff's maid?

POIROT
(to Pierre)
Quick, then.

101 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
(to a mystified McQueen)
Ah, Mr McQueen! I regret to have kept you waiting, but there has been much to establish.

He ushers McQueen through the door of No. 9 into:

102 POIROT'S COMPARTMENT

In b.g. Bianchi turns from the window.

POIROT
(to McQueen)
Please be seated. Signor Bianchi and I should be grateful for whatever you can usefully tell us. Are you, for example - ?

MCQUEEN
Let's get two things straight first, Monsieur. Who, "for example", are you? And what is your status here?

BIANCHI
M. Hercule Poirot is a detective officially delegated to investigate this case by myself, who am a Director of the Line. You have heard his name, perhaps.

MCQUEEN
Oh, sure. Except I thought he was a 'ladies' dressmaker.

A frozen silence.

BIANCHI
Roba da non credere!

MCQUEEN
What's incredible? He's interested in ladies' hat-boxes.

POIROT
(recovering)
Let us advance with the matter in hand. Your relationship with Mr Ratchett?

MCQUEEN
I am - was - his secretary.
(catching a look from Poirot)
And that is - was - all.

POIROT
For how long?

MCQUEEN
A year, give or take.

POIROT
How did you meet?

MCQUEEN
In Persia. He was collecting Gurgan pottery with considerable success. And I was trying to collect oil concessions - with so little success that I went bankrupt. He offered me the job. I took it.

POIROT
And since then?

MCQUEEN
We've travelled about. He was hampered by knowing no languages. I acted more as a courier than a secretary. It was ... a pleasant enough life.

POIROT
What part of America did he come from?

MCQUEEN
I don't know.
(seeing Poirot's raised eyebrows)
The fact is, M. Poirot, I know less than nothing about his background. Mr Ratchett never spoke of it.

POIROT
Why, do you think?

MCQUEEN
At first I thought he might have been ashamed of his beginnings. Some men are.

102 Continued

POIROT
Do you still believe that?

MCQUEEN
(frankly)
No.

POIROT
What, then?

MCQUEEN
I began to believe he might have left America to escape something ... or someone. I think he succeeded until a few weeks ago.

POIROT
And then?

MCQUEEN
(unstrapping briefcase)
He began to get anonymous letters. Threatening letters.
(proffering open file)
Like these.

As Poirot turns to read to Bianchi in b.g.:

CUT TO

103 TOPSHOT OVER POIROT'S SHOULDER: THE "LETTERS"

In fact they consist of two sheets of ordinary paper, each containing a brief message in crude, pencilled capitals. As we read them, so (to Bianchi) does:

O.S. POIROT'S VOICE
"I kill killers" ... and ...
(flipping to second sheet)
... "Prepare to die".

104 BIANCHI, REACTING

BIANCHI
How brief!

105 MASTERSHOT COMPARTMENT

POIROT
But, in a sense, how complicated!

MCQUEEN
Huh?

POIROT
The writer wishes to conceal his identity by deceiving us into thinking that each message has been written by two or more hands.
(indicating to McQueen, but not to us)
Compare, for example, the two E's in "Prepare".

MCQUEEN
(eagerly)
I noticed that.

POIROT
Did you also notice ... ?
(breaking off)
Never mind. (*)
(returning file)
Mr McQueen, on the night of the murder I saw you despatching a telegram from Belgrade Station.

McQueen flips through file and proffers it again to Poirot, who scans it, during:

MCQUEEN
There had been an error in the delivery of some Islamic pottery.
(receiving file back from Poirot)
He sent for me to see the text soon after we left Belgrade. (**) That was the last I ever saw of him.

POIROT
You don't sound sorry.

---

(*) There are twelve letters in each message.

(**) Scenes 50, 62 and 66 confirm this.

105 Continued

MCQUEEN
Except that he paid my salary, I'm not.

POIROT
Why?

MCQUEEN
(disarming smile)
I may be wrong, but I thought him evil.

POIROT
Were there other threatening letters?

MCQUEEN
Yes, but none that I was allowed to read. He used to burn them.

POIROT
Ah! That explains...

A pause.

MCQUEEN
What?

POIROT
(smiling)
... my interest in hat-boxes.

CUT TO:

106 INT. RATCHETT'S NO. 10. POIROT'S HANDS

opening old, oblong, leather hat-box. The lifted lid reveals the Maid's three austere hats - each skewered to its (still invisible) support by a hat-pin. There are two hats at either end of the box itself, and a third depends upside down from the centre of the lid- so that, when the lid is closed, the third hat fits snugly between the first two. Over this:

POIROT
Precisely what I needed!

107 2 - SHOT: POIROT AND DOCTOR

DOCTOR
(greatly intrigued)
You are going to disguise yourself as a woman!

107 Continued

For the first time, we hear Poirot laugh out loud.

POIROT
It would take more than a hat to effect such a transformation, my friend. Have patience. When we have dealt with your notes, you will understand.

We PULL BACK to:

108 MASTERSHOT: No. 10

The bedclothes now entirely obscure the corpse. Doctor opens a black leather-backed notepad secured with elastic.

POIROT
First, the wounds. You counted a dozen.

DOCTOR
Five are deep, of which three are lethal. The rest are shallow, of which two are slight as to be mere scratches.

POIROT
(frowning)
What does that suggest? That there were two murderers - a strong man and a weak man?

DOCTOR
Or a weak woman?

POIROT
Or a man stabbing his victim both strongly and weakly in order to confuse us? At least we know that, by the time of the murder, Ratchett was too drugged to cry out or defend himself with ...
(lifting bed-pillow to reveal revolver)
... this.

DOCTOR
(taken aback)
But how did you guess that he -

108 Continued

POIROT
(replacing pillow)
I didn't. He showed it to me when he offered me $15,000 to be his bodyguard - and I refused.
(shiver of conscience)
Ought I to have accepted ... ?

DOCTOR
(to distract him)
Let us re-examine the ash-tray.

Both approach and peer down on:

109 POV TOPSHOT: BIG CUT-GLASS ASHTRAY ON TABLETOP

It contains two used matches - one flat, one round; a cigar-butt; a used pipecleaner; and the ashes of a piece of totally burnt paper, of which only a blackened, brittle inch remains uncrumbled and intact.

Over this:

(O.S.) POIROT'S VOICE
I suspect the round match comes from a box I gave him when he asked for a light in the Dining Car.

CUT TO:

110 POIROT

already gingerly searching the pockets of Ratchett's jacket in wardrobe, and extracting ... a match-box.

POIROT
This was the box.

He delicately searches other pockets, during:

POIROT
The flat match comes from one of the "book" matches issued free to passengers. So a visitor must have used his or her own book of matches to burn the piece of paper in the ashtray.

Doctor has already begun an intensive search under chairs, table etc. for the missing match-book during:

110 Continued

DOCTOR
Perhaps the owner of the pipe-cleaner ...?

POIROT
Perhaps, indeed. Or perhaps the cleaner was "planted" to incriminate the smoker. I have observed only one pipe-smoker on the coach (*) but there may be others. If so -

DOCTOR
(peering under bed)
Aha!

POIROT
You have it?

DOCTOR
No. I have something else.

He proffers:

111 INSERT: A LADY'S CRUMPLED HANDKERCHIEF CHANGES HANDS

Over this:

POIROT
With the initial "H".

112 MASTERSHOT

DOCTOR
That should not be hard to identify.

POIROT
I wonder. Christian name or surname? We must wait till we see the passports.
(stamping in sudden anger)
Doctor, there are far too many clues in this room. Let us now deal with what I hope will prove to be the last of them.

As he moves to the dressing-table:

---

(*) Arbuthnot. See Scene 54.

112 Continued

DOCTOR
The burnt paper?

POIROT
Precisely. Bring me the hat box.

Poirot opens the attaché-case, which he has previously placed on Ratchett's dressing-table, and takes out a pair of curling tongs and a small spirit lamp whose wick-protector he removes.

POIROT
(diffidently)
I use them for the moustaches.

DOCTOR
(bemused)
But what have your moustaches to do with . . . ?

POIROT lights the spirit lamp and, from the box, carefully removes, first, two hat-pins and then two hats. Each hat has been supported by two beehive-shaped lumps of the sort of wire mesh one uses for arranging flowers. He now flattens out one of the humps and, with the tongs, delicately places the intact inch of blackened paper on top of it. He then flattens the other hump and gently, cautiously, places it on top of the first, so that the paper is sandwiched between the two. During all the above:

POIROT
You observe, my dear Doctor, that I am not one to rely upon the sophisticated scientific apparatus. It is the psychology I seek - not the fingerprint but the print of a human soul.

He gingerly picks up the wire "sandwich" with the tongs.

POIROT
However, at this point I would welcome a little scientific assistance.

We MOVE IN VERY CLOSE, as he begins to heat the "sandwich" over the spirit-lamp. He and the Doctor peer tensely down on:

113 SPECIAL EFFECT POV TOPSHOT: THE "SANDWICH"

Slowly the wire begins to glow; then . . . so does the blackened paper on whose surface we see, as though in capital letters of fire:

113 Continued

" AISY ARMS "

Over this:

(O.S.) POIROT'S VOICE
(excited)
Observe! Memorize! You are my only witness!

CUT TO:

114 2 - SHOT: POIROT, DOCTOR

DOCTOR
A-I-S-Y, space, A-R-M-S

POIROT
Right!

DOCTOR
But what does it mean?

POIROT
It means that we know the true identity of Mr Ratchett - and why he had to leave America.

CUT TO:

115 ATHENS COACH BIANCHI'S COMPARTMENT

He and Poirot are seated.

POIROT
You remember the Armstrong case?

BIANCHI
(instantly)
The kidnapping of the little American girl? And the killing? Who does not?

POIROT
You remember the name of the child?

BIANCHI:
Certamente! It was Daisy.

POIROT
(meaningly)
D ...

BIANCHI
(light dawning)
... A-I-S-Y, space, A-R-M-S ...

POIROT
... T-R-O-N-G. Daisy Armstrong.

BIANCHI
And Ratchett is her murderer?

POIROT
No, no. The actual murderer was tried, sentenced and electrocuted. But he was only the subordinate - the Number Two - of a Boss whom he was too terrified to identify. A connection between Number Two and Number One was never proved, though all the world knew that it existed. Number One was acquitted.

BIANCHI
I remember feeling ashamed that he had an Italian name.

POIROT
Cassetti.

BIANCHI
(nodding)
Cassetti.

POIROT
There were thousands in America who would gladly have killed him. But he went wisely into hiding with two hundred thousand dollars' worth of ransom-money, undoubtedly changed his name and must later have re-emerged, in some other country, as ... Ratchett.

BIANCHI
Che ... che mostro! He had a child's blood on his hands.

115 Continued

POIROT
He had worse than that. After the shock of the body's discovery, the mother, who was expecting another baby, gave premature birth to a dead child, and herself died in the process. Her English husband - once a brave officer in the Scots Guards - shot himself. And Mrs Armstrong's own maid, who came under suspicion of complicity, threw herself from a window and died, too.

BIANCHI
(fervently)
Then I thank God that Cassetti, who spilt so much blodd in his lifetime, has had his own blood spilt now.

POIROT
I agree.

After a small pause.

BIANCHI
(less fervently)
All the same, it is not necessary that he should spill it in a sleeping-compartment of the Orient Express. There must be other places.

116 RATCHETT'S NO.10 DOCTOR ALONE

He briskly adjusts bedclothes over corpse; pockets his notebook; dusts down his own clothes with his hands, which he washes (unsqueamishly) in Ratchett's basin; opens the outer window two inches (WIND-EFFECTS SLIGHTLY UP) and presses bell, which Pierre instantly answers.

DOCTOR
Ah, Pierre. I've left the window open. For reasons - you understand - of refrigeration.

PIERRE
(swallowing hard)
Very good, Monsieur.

Doctor tips back basin with CLUNK! over which we

CUT TO:

117 DINING CAR INTERCUTTING REACTIONS OF ALL PASSENGERS DURING:

CHIEF ATTENDANT
Messieurs' Dames! We hope you have enjoyed your luncheon despite its early service, but Signor Bianchi is anxious that the inquiry should be completed speedily.

ARBUTHNOT
(audibly)
Can't say I relish the thought of being questioned by a Wop.

FOSCARELLI
(flaring)
I was born and raised a Wopp-a, and I resent -

CHIEF ATTENDANT
Signor Bianchi would be obliged if you would either remain in the Dining Car or in your own compartments until called for questioning in the Pullman Car.

CUT TO:

118 PULLMAN CAR

Re-furnished as Inquiry Headquarters. Poirot, Doctor and Bianchi are completing its inspection, while Pierre awaits their verdict.

NOTE: We shall CUT between an inner Private Compartment, where the interrogations will take place, and the main body of the Pullman Car where the passengers will await questioning. The diagram of the Calais coach requested by Poirot is pinned to the wall of the Private Compartment.

POIROT
(seating himself)
Excellent.

A small sigh of relief from the indefatigable Pierre. Poirot takes a passenger list and scribbles (we need not move in) a number against each name.

118 Continued

POIROT
Pierre, since you are here already, we can conveniently begin by questioning you. After that ...
(handing over list)
... please summon the passengers one by one in this order - except for the Princess Dragomiroff, who is not only of royal blood but even older than she tries not to look, so we will go to her. Now please be seated.

Pierre sits a shade nervously across the table from Poirot, who takes a passport from the pile and examines it.

POIROT
Your full name is Pierre Paul Michel.

PIERRE
Correct, Monsieur.

POIROT
(smiling)
Two male saints' names. You must be greatly blessed.

PIERRE
I have had my share of good fortune, Monsieur.

POIROT
(sympathetically)
And of bad? I note the cancellation of your wife's photograph ...
(peering)
... nearly five years ago. She is deceased?

PIERRE
She died, Monsieur - of grief at the death of ...
(voice breaking)
our only daughter. From scarlet fever.

POIROT
I am truly sorry.
(rising)
Let us talk of less distressing matters.

118 Continued

We INTERCUT Poirot's silver "Eversharp" pencil pointing appropriately both to map and coach-plan, during:

POIROT
On the night of the murder did you, when we had left Belgrade, see anybody else enter Mr Ratchett's room after Mr Beddoes and Mr McQueen?

PIERRE
No. Monsieur.

POIROT
Then who were the last passengers to retire for the night to their own compartments? Show me on the diagram.

PIERRE
(pointing to No. 3 & 4.)
About 1.30, I remember seeing ...

CUT TO:

119 SEPIA FLASHBACK (TRAIN STATIONARY AND SILENT)

Arbuthnot shakes hands with McQueen, who retires alone into No. 3-4. We TRACK BACK in front of Arbuthnot, puffing his pipe and strolling almost the length of the coach to No. 15, which he enters and shuts. We TRACK BACK a shade further to include Pierre watching from his conductor's seat.

O.S. PIERRE'S VOICE
(continuing without pause over above)
... the English colonel say good-night to Mr McQueen outside the Number Three and Four. I saw him walk back into his compartment - the Number Fifteen - which he did not leave. (*)

BACK TO:

---

(*) These SEPIA FLASHBACKS will visually represent and enliven stories told by interrogated persons, whose evidence is not necessarily the truth.

123 Continued

O.S. VOICE FROM No.10
(same TRACK as in Scene 86)
Ce n'est rien. C'etait un cauchemar.

124 OUT

125 INQUIRY HQ (COLOUR)

POIROT
Who rang the second bell, while you were answering Mr Ratchett's?

PIERRE
The Princess Dragomiroff, Monsieur. She asked me to summon her maid.

POIROT
Thank you, Pierre. That is all ... for the moment.

He indicates the door, through which Pierre leaves.

DOCTOR
(instantly)
He had the means to do it. A pass-key for Ratchett's room -

POIROT
(ironic)
And a knife borrowed from the chef ...

BIANCHI
(hopefully)
With whom he was in league?

POIROT
... which he plunged repeatedly and without motive into the body of his excusably astonished victim. Anyway, we know that Ratchett's door was not only locked but chained.
(to discomfited Doctor)
Kindly ring for the second witness.

PING! Pierre ushers in McQueen and withdraws.

POIROT
(indicating chair)
Mr McQueen, since our last conversation I have learnt the identity of your late employer.

125 Continued

MCQUEEN
(interested)
You don't say!

POIROT
Ratchett, as you yourself suspected, was merely an alias. He was in fact Cassetti ...
(McQueen's jaw drops)
... the gangster who masterminded the infamous kidnapping and killing of little Daisy Armstrong.

After an astonished pause:

MCQUEEN
The dirty, rotten Italian bastard.

Bianchi gives a deprecatory cough.

POIROT
You had no idea of this?

MCQUEEN
No, sir! If I had, I'd have chopped off my right hand so I couldn't type his lousy letters - and I'd have killed him with my left.

POIROT
You feel you could have done the good deed yourself?

MCQUEEN
Before God, I do. I-
(rueful grin)
Seems I'm kind of incriminating myself.

POIROT
(smiling)
I should be more inclined to suspect you, Mr McQueen, if you displayed an inordinate sorrow at your employer's decease.

MCQUEEN
Sorrow? My Dad was the District Attorney who handled the case. Mrs Armstrong and her husband visited our home twice for advice

125 Continued

MCQUEEN (Cont)
about the ransom-money. She was ... gentle and frightened. But not too frightened to take an interest in a seventeen-year-old boy who wanted to go on the stage. She even said she'd write to ... except she died before she got around to it. She was as helpful to me as a mother.

POIROT
Forgive a Freudian question. Do you love your mother?

MCQUEEN
(frowning)
I did. She died when I was eight - an impressionable age. Why d'you ask?

POIROT
You and I shared a compartment on the first night of our journey. You called out "Mother!" twice - in your sleep.

MCQUEEN
I still dream about her.
(very edgy)
Go on! Tell me I'm emotionally retarded. Tell me that's why I never married.

POIROT
(firmly)
I'm not here to tell you anything, Mr McQueen. You are here to tell me.

MCQUEEN
I'm sorry. Please tell me one thing more. How did you figure out Ratchett's identity?

POIROT
By an anonymous message found in his compartment.

MCQUEEN
But that's not like him. He'd have burnt it, like I told you.

125 Continued

POIROT
He did.

MCQUEEN
Then how did you decipher ...

POIROT
(his finest hour)
With the help of a hat-box.
(smiling)
I really should have been a ladies dressmaker.
(indicating door)
Thank you, Mr McQueen.

As door shuts.

126 NEW ANGLE

BIANCHI
(rising)
He did it. He murdered Cassetti. He practically confessed as much.

DOCTOR
(putting on professional airs)
No. The psychology is wrong.

Poirot rolls resigned eyes.

DOCTOR
A sensitive, motherless boy conceives a passion for a lady whom he admires, above all, for her gentleness.

Poirot shuts his eyes.

DOCTOR
Could McQueen, admiring gentleness, commit so foul a murder ...

Poirot starts a yawn.

DOCTOR
... without betraying the very gentleness of what we might call his "fairy godmother"?

Poirot suddenly freezes - with mouth still open (but no longer in a yawn!) and wide eyes blazing in revelation.

126 Continued

POIROT
Godmother!
(to Doctor)
Now you have accidentally said something valuable ...
(over Doctor's puzzled frown)
... which you may celebrate by pressing the bell.

PING! Pierre ushers in Beddoes, who stands before Poirot like a butler about to take orders.

POIROT
Come, Mr Beddoes, this is not an inquisition - only an inquiry.
(proffering silver cigarette-case)
Would you care for a Gaulloise?

A faint wrinkling of the nose takes the edge off Beddoes' subservient smile.

BEDDOES
I only smoke Players No. 3, sir ...

POIROT
Then smoke one, I beg -

BEDDOES
... when not on duty.

POIROT
Ah! It is of duty that I wish us to converse. When you took Mr Ratchett his valerian about 9.40 yesterday evening, he was already in bed?

BEDDOES
That is so, sir. Mr Ratchett always retired early - on trains.

POIROT
What were your duties before leaving him for the night?

BEDDOES
To place his glass of Valerian within reach, sir ...

CUT TO

127 SEPIA FLASHBACK: INT. RATCHETT'S NO. 10

This time with the dramatic VISUAL impact of the room swaying and FULL SOUND EFFECTS of the train hurtling at high speed towards Vincovci.

Beddoes has just set down the glass of Valerian beside an unused ash-tray on Ratchett's bedside-table. As he collects his master's scattered clothes for folding on a chair or hanging in the wardrobe, Ratchett waves a strip of paper at him.

RATCHETT
Beddoes, did you put this on my toilet-table during dinner?

BEDDOES
No, sir.

RATCHETT
Then who the hell did?

BEDDOES
I couldn't say, sir. What is it?

RATCHETT
What it is is none of your goddam business. I want to know how it got here.

BEDDOES
I have no idea, sir.

His duties performed, he stands with hands behind his back against the bolted communicating-door to Mrs Hubbard's room.

BEDDOES
Will there be anything more, Sir?

RATCHETT
There will. Tell Mr McQueen I want to see him - now.

BEDDOES
And when shall I call you in the morning Sir?

RATCHETT
Not before ten.

CUT TO

128 INQUIRY HQ (COLOUR)

POIROT
Was that usual?

BEDDOES
Oh, yes, sir. His breakfast was his "Amber Moon". He never rose till it had taken effect.

BIANCHI
(interested)
I must remember that.

POIROT
(using diagram)
So you instructed Mr McQueen and returned to your compartment - the Number One and Two - whose upper berth was occupied by Mr Foscarelli.

BEDDOES
Yes, sir. The Italian ... person.

Another cough from Bianchi.

POIROT
Does he speak English?

BEDDOES
A kind of English, sir. He's worked in a place called Chicago.

POIROT
Do you talk together much?

BEDDOES
No, sir. I prefer to read.

CUT TO

129 SEPIA FLASHBACK. INT. NO. 1-2 (2ND CLASS) 2-SHOT: NIGHT-SHIRTED FOSCARELLI LEANING OVER UPPER BERTH TO ADDRESS PYJAMA'D BEDDOES IN LOWER

Over VISUAL and SOUND-EFFECTS of train in motion:

129 Continued

FOSCARELLI
What-a you reading, Mister Beddo-ess?

BEDDOES
"Love's Captive".

FOSCARELLI
Is it about-a sex?

We CLOSE TO:

BEDDOES
No, Mr Foskerelly. It's about ... intimacy.

Beddoes' pocket-watch on the wall-hook registers 10.30.

CUT TO

130 INQUIRY HQ (COLOUR)

POIROT
And, soon, you went to sleep?

BEDDOES
No, sir. Not till four in the morning. I had the toothache.

POIROT
Tchk! Tchk! And your companion?

BEDDOES
He snored.

POIROT
Did either of you leave the compartment at any time before four?

BEDDOES
No, sir.

POIROT
(leafing through passport)
A final point. How did you come to be employed by Mr Ratchett?

130 Continued

BEDDOES
Through Maibaums, sir - the big catering agency in New York. You'll find me on their books.

POIROT
And before then?

BEDDOES
I was in the Army, sir. As a private soldier.

POIROT
Where?

BEDDOES
Troon, sir.

POIROT
In the Far East?

BEDDOES
No, sir. In Scotland.

POIROT
(recovering)
Forgive me. I am only an ignorant Belgian.

BEDDOES
(much more warmly)
Oh, a Belgian, sir. I thought you were French.

POIROT
Did you know that Mr Ratchett was of Italian extraction?

BEDDOES
Ah! That would account for his hot temper.

Bianchi again discomfited.

POIROT
His real name was Cassetti.
(pause)
The name means nothing to you?
(head-shake)
You remember the Armstrong case?

130 Continued

BEDDOES
(trying to)
No ... yes, sir. A little girl ...

POIROT
Cassetti was responsible for her murder.
(silence)
How does that strike you?

After a pause.

BEDDOES
I have often thought, sir, that instead of our employers requiring references from us, we should require references from them.

POIROT
Thank you, Mr Beddoes.

He rises to escort Beddoes into outer corridor, but:

BEDDOES
(smiling)
Please be seated, sir. I'm used to opening doors.

We PAN OFF him (as o.s. door shuts) to the three "inquisitors".

BIANCHI
(not to be outdone by Doctor)
He did it. He had constant access to Ratchett. He himself could have drugged the valerian before bringing it to his master. As to the psychology who knows what passions boil and bubble beneath the stiff shirt to which his profession has called him? Did he not read "Love's Captive" ... in bed ... at night?

DOCTOR
(not to be outdone by Bianchi)
At a time when you suggest that he should have been murdering Mr Ratchett?

From outside, we suddenly hear the engine emitting three short, sharp whistles. Bianchi leaps to his feet, opens the window and looks out at:

131 EXT. FRONTAL CLOSE SHOT: FIREMAN CLAMBERING ON TO SNOW-PILED CARRIAGE-TOP

as O.S. train ahead of him gives three more whistles - very loud and near. As he raises binoculars, we hear six very distant notes from what sounds like a far-off bugle.

CUT TO

132 INT. INQUIRY HQ

BIANCHI
(shutting window)
I fear that help is at hand. Even if it is only a working party with picks and shovels, we shall have to work fast to complete this enquiry before reaching Brod. If it is an engine with a snow-plough, we shall have to work very fast indeed.

DOCTOR
(finger poised over bell-push)
Who's next?

POIROT
Mrs. Hubbard.

BIANCHI
God have mercy!

PING! Pierre enters, backing away from Mrs Hubbard.

PIERRE
The bugle means that help is near, Madame.

Mrs Hubbard sails past him like an embattled Valkyrie.

MRS HUBBARD
And high time, too!

She plumps into the chair indicated by:

POIROT
(authoritative)
Time is what counts, Mrs Hubbard. If we are to complete this inquiry before reaching Brod, I must make my questions as brief as I hope you will make your answers. The more often you can confine

132 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
yourself to a simple "Yes" or "No", the better.

MRS HUBBARD
Well, don't waste time yattering. Begin!

POIROT
(scanning passport)
Your full name is Harriet Belinda Hubbard.

MRS HUBBARD
Yes. I was called Harriet after my -

POIROT
By now Mr McQueen has doubtless informed you of the true identity of Mr Ratchett.

MRS HUBBARD
Yes, that low-down, stinking son-of-a --

POIROT
Were you acquainted with the Armstrongs?

MRS HUBBARD
No, of course not. They were way above our class. Anyways, they lived in -

POIROT
Mrs Hubbard, I overheard the whole of your conversation with Pierre about there being a man in your room soon after one o'clock on the night of the murder. Tell me one thing more. Was the bolt locked on your side of the door that communicated with Mr Ratchett's compartment, when you went to bed?

MRS HUBBARD
Yes, so far as I know. My daughter had advised me to be sure to -

POIROT
How do you mean - so far as you knew? Could you not see the bolt from your bed?

MRS HUBBARD
No.

POIROT
Why?

132 Continued

MRS HUBBARD
It was masked by my make-up bag on the hook above. Pierre checked the bolt after I rang my bell and told him there was a man in my -

POIROT
Yes, yes, we know all about that.

He snaps the passport shut and replaces it under the pile.

MRS HUBBARD
Oh, no, you don't.

A pregnant pause.

POIROT
I beg your pardon?

MRS HUBBARD
You don't know what I found this morning on top of the magazine I'd been reading to send myself asleep before the man arrived in my room.

POIROT
What?

Triumphantly Mrs Hubbard hauls a capacious handbag into view and (with great deliberation, as both Bianchi and Doctor converge on the table) proceeds to burrow into its interior. She takes out in turn two large clean handkerchiefs, a pair of horn-rimmed glasses, a bottle of Howard's Aspirin, a packet of Glauber salts, a small flat tin labelled "Curiously Strong Peppermints", a book of American Express cheques, a snapshot of an extraordinarily plain-looking female child, some letters, five strings of pseudo-Oriental beads and a small metal object - a button. As all three peer at it:

BIANCHI
Ma! This is a button from the tunic of a Wagon-Lit conductor.

But Poirot seems already to have become more interested in Mrs Hubbard's handkerchiefs. As he helps her to replace the contents of the bag:

132 Continued

POIROT
(absently)
Doctor, will you be so kind as to verify whether Pierre has lost a tunic-button?

DOCTOR
Gladly.

Bianchi hands button to Doctor, who exits by door, to which Poirot now shepherds Mrs Hubbard. On the way, he stoops as though to pick up (behind her) something that has fallen.

POIROT
Your handkerchief, Mrs Hubbard?

She looks at the little scrap of cambric which he proffers her.

MRS HUBBARD
That's not mine, Mr Poirot.
(indicating bag)
I have mine right here.

POIROT
Ah! I thought that the initial "H" -

MRS HUBBARD
(smiling)
H for Harriet, H for Hubbard - but it's still not mine.
(patting bag)
Mine are sensible things - not expensive Paris fallals. What good's a hanky like that to anybody's nose? One sneeze and it has to go to the laundry.

She laughs hugely, in the doorway, at her own mot. We CLOSE to their profiled heads in a 2-SHOT.

POIROT
Forgive me, Mrs Hubbard. You have afforded us a great deal of help in this difficult case. Thank you, if I may so express it, for playing your part.

For an extraordinary split-second, the laughter leaves her eyes - and then returns.

MRS HUBBARD
If you need me again, I'll be around.

CUT TO

133 INT. MAIN BODY OF PULLMAN - PIERRE LEADING GRETA OHLSSON

who awaits interrogation with a timidity which should be touching as well as funny.

GRETA
I am afright.

PIERRE
Have no fear, Mademoiselle. They all come out looking very relieved.

GRETA
But I do not relieve myself. I am afright to know what they will -

PING! Pierre ushers her gently through the communicating door into:

134 INQUIRY HQ CLOSE 2-SHOT: DOCTOR MURMURING IN POIROT'S EAR

DOCTOR
Pierre has no tunic-button missing. And all his buttons are sewn on with old thread.

POIROT
As I expected.
(looking up)
God dag, Fröken Ohlsson.

GRETA
(delighted)
Snakke de Svensk?

POIROT
(ruefully)
Alas, Mademoiselle.. That is the extent of my Swedish. Forgive me if I am personal, but I have observed that most Scandinavians of my acquaintance are well-educated in speaking other languages because nobody speaks theirs. Yet you...?

GRETA
I was born backwards. That is why I work in Africa as missionary teaching little brown babies more backwards than myself.

POIROT
(scanning passport)
But I see you have spent... three months in America. Were you not able to improve - ?

134 Continued

GRETA
Was with group international for getting moneys for African missions from American rich. I speak Swedish to big audiences at American Swedish Institution in Minneapolis (*) and other big cities. In ten week we make 14,000 dollars 27 cent.

POIROT
I am satisfied.

He approaches the diagram.

POIROT
Here is the compartment you share with -

GRETA
And here is my Number Seven bed.

POIROT
Tell me about Number Eight.

GRETA
Is filled with Miss Deb-en-ham. A nice young lady from Baghdad, where she teach three children English. Three forwards children.

POIROT
After the train left Vincovci, did she leave her berth?

GRETA
No. She sleep like me.

POIROT
If you yourself were asleep, how can you be sure she did not leave?

GRETA
In Shimoga Mission I can hear snake breathe. I would know.

POIROT
Did you leave your room.

---

(*) This exists.

134 Continued

GRETA
Not till morning - in my bed-gown.

POIROT
Was your "bed-gown" white - with red... animals.

GRETA
No. Is Jaeger.

POIROT
And Miss Debenham's "bed-gown"?

GRETA
(searching for the word)
Det var lilla.

POIROT
(acutely)
Like the French "lilas" - lilac?

GRETA
(nodding)
Ja vel!

POIROT
Why are you making this trip, Miss Ohlsson?

GRETA
Same as always. Money for mission.

POIROT
(rising with a dismissive smile)
When this is all over, Mademoiselle, I promise to make you an emolument.

GRETA
(fervently)
Tusen takk skal de har!

Poirot dextrously takes one of the two arms outstretched to embrace him - and pilots her into the corridor. As he returns:

BIANCHI
I am convinced of her innocence. She has indeed the brain of a sheep -

134 Continued

BIANCHI (Cont)
(as ever, hopefully)
Or of a wolf in sheep's clothing?

DOCTOR
(magisterially)
Nonsense! As a doctor, I would say that her physique is as feeble as -

POIROT
- some of your own conclusions? Please ring the bell twice.

PING! PING! Pierre ushers in the Count and Countess Andrenyi - the latter a model of Parisian haute couture.

POIROT
Pierre, set another chair for M. le Comte...

As Pierre does so:

... and be so kind as to inform the Princess Dragomiroff that Signor Bianchi and myself will shortly attend on her and her maid in her own compartment.

BIANCHI
That is very proper.

Pierre leaves, and Poirot scans a passport.

POIROT
M. le Comte, this is a Hungarian diplomatic passport, which gives you and your wife the right to refuse interrogation.

COUNT
(sympathetic smile)
In the circumstances, we waive that right.

POIROT
You are most kind.
(turning)
As you know, Mme la Comtesse, it is a joint passport which sets out your husband's name and titles but requires no particulars about yourself except for your signature and maiden

134 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
name, your maiden name is clearly... Grunwald.

COUNTESS
That is correct, Monsieur. My family is of German extraction, though I now hold Hungarian citizenship.

Her attractive voice is cosmopolitan with German undertones.

POIROT
Unfortunately, the first letter of your married signature has been almost obliterated...

We ANGLE DOWN over Poirot's shoulder on:

135 INSERT: PASSPORT-PAGE

Over this:

POIROT'S VOICE (O.S.)
... by a grease-spot.

NOTE: This needs careful designing which cannot be reproduced here in typescript. At its simplest, the grease-spot could lie a hair's breadth to our LEFT of the capital "E" in "Elena" - but there are other ways.

CUT BACK TO

136 INQUIRY HQ.

COUNT
(blandly)
I must say I find Immigration Officials are often less than cleanly. They sit in their little box eating a buttered roll with one hand and stamping the spilt butter into your passport with the other.

POIROT
Precisely.
(handing pen and paper to Countess)
I should therefore be greatly obliged if you would duplicate the mutilated entry on your Passport.

136 Continued

COUNTESS
(as she writes)
Elena... Andrenyi... née... Grunwald.

She hands paper and pen back to Poirot who juxtaposes the two documents, as we

CUT TO

137 INSERT: PASSPORT-PAGE AND SIGNED PAPER

Over this:

POIROT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Allowing for the difference in pens, the duplication seems exact.

CUT BACK TO

138 INQUIRY HQ

POIROT
There would be little point, then in asking whether this handkerchief...
(producing cambric)
... is yours.

COUNTESS
(examining it coolly)
Since it contains neither of my initials - no point whatever, Monsieur.

POIROT
And even less point in asking the colour of your dressing-gown?

The Count wordlessly expostulates at this impertinence.

COUNTESS
None - unless you take a professional interest in pale blue chiffon.

POIROT
(nettled)
I take a professional interest in crime, Madame. Have you and your husband ever visited America together?

138 Continued

COUNTESS
No. We first met in Wiesbaden - much later.

POIROT
(sharply)
Later than what?

COUNT
Later than the days of my youth, when I was en poste in Washington.

POIROT
You lived in Washington?

COUNT
What diplomat of promise has not?

He stifles a bored yawn, on which Poirot (jumping up to approach diagram) pounces.

POIROT
(indicating No. 13)
You did not sleep well last night?

COUNT
On the contrary, apart from one of Mrs Hubbard's customary outbursts, I slept very soundly.

POIROT
(indicating No. 12 to Countess)
And you, Madame, who were Mrs Hubbard's next-door neighbour?

COUNTESS
Even more soundly. We neither of us woke till after eight. As is my custom on night-trains, I took Trional.

Poirot turns questioningly to Doctor.

DOCTOR
Diethyl-sulphone-dimethyl-methane. One dilutes the white crystals in water. It is a strong hypnotic.

COUNTESS
(laughing)
You make it sound like a poison.

138 Continued

DOCTOR
As with most sleeping-draughts - if taken in excessive quantity, a poison is what it is.

COUNT
(leaping to his feet)
You are not accusing - ?

Bianchi rises in consternation; Poirot, in composure. As he approaches and opens corridor-door:

POIROT
(gently)
You are not accused. You are excused. Thank you, both, for your help and co-operation.

He shuts the door behind them.

DOCTOR
You think she administered the Trional to Ratchett?

POIROT
No.

BIANCHI
(desperately)
Then what do you think?

POIROT
I think you have reached a state where, in order to find a victim -

BIANCHI
I would confess to having done the deed myself? You are right!

POIROT
I also think that, so far, the Count and Countess are the only passengers who have told us the truth. Not the whole truth. I did not press for that. We can discover it more expediently... elsewhere.

CUT TO

139 INT. COMPARTMENT NO. 14 - HILDEGARDE SCHMIDT WITH O.S. PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF

NOTE: The compartment itself is basically no different in lay-out from the others we have already seen, but it is opulently transformed by the imposing patina of personal possessions without which the Princess never travels: e.g. a signed photograph of the late Tsar and Tsarina of Russia in a silver frame; a miniature Fabergé clock (at 11.35) set preciously in an opaline Easter egg; an open shagreen writing-case replete with deckle-edged crested notepaper, envelopes, blotter and a gold Swan fountain-pen; a flattened-oblong frame displaying the late General Prince Dragomiroff's Imperial Army medals set in blue velvet; and an open, portable walnut cabinet containing a cut-glass decanter nestled snugly between small plush-cushioned Lalique glasses. In brief: our set-dresser may go to town.

ACTION RESUMES

We START on Hildegarde doggedly reading aloud from a volume by Goethe, while CAMERA ROVES the compartment in the general direction of O.S. Princess.

HILDEGARDE
"Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen bluhn?
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen gluhn,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht -
Kennst du es wohl?"

On the word "wohl" with its upward interrogative inflection, CAMERA PANS finally to MCU of Princess. She is fast asleep.

CUT TO

140 REVERSE MCU: HILDEGARDE

Observing this. She sighs a little, but continues doggedly, dutifully and a shade dispiritedly to read aloud to a mistress who would at once wake up if she stopped.

HILDEGARDE
"Dahin! Dahin!
Möcht ich mit dir, O mein Gelieb - "

A knock at the door.

141 QUICK CUTS

- Hildegarde snaps book shut.

- This (rather than the knock) awakes:

PRINCESS
Why have you stopped reading ?

- Hildegarde, already at the door, admits:

142 BIANCHI AND POIROT

PRINCESS
Signor Bianchi!

She extends a jewelled hand which Bianchi deferentially kisses.

BIANCHI
Altezza, e permesso presentare il investigatore distinto, Monsieur Hercule Poirot?

Poirot makes a stiff, correct little royal bow from the neck.

PRINCESS
Ah! Hildegarde has read me many of your cases in the newspaper, but I have had to stop her. Nowadays they are the only sort of literature that keeps me awake - and I need what I resolutely continue to call my beauty-sleep.
(indicating decanter)
Would you care for a little Cognac?

POIROT
(refusing)
Thank you.

BIANCHI
(accepting)
Please.

PRINCESS
Hildegarde! Now!
(barely perceptible twinkle)
You wish me to confess to the murder of Mr... Whatsisname?

Even Bianchi (to whose appalled face we briefly PAN) would not have wanted this..

142 Continued

POIROT
Au contraire, Mme. la Princesse. It is I who wish to make a confession. You pay me the compliment of having read about me. I return the compliment by admitting that I have read about you.

He intentionally pauses.

PRINCESS
(very still)
Continue.

POIROT
I have been accidentally reminded that you were the Godmother of Sonia Armstrong who was herself the mother of the kidnapped child, Daisy.

Bianchi almost drops his glass; but, draining it instead, shamelessly holds it out to Hildegarde for re-filling.

POIROT
(unperturbed)
How did you become her godmother, Madame?

The Princess, for what seems an eternity, remains motionless. Then:

PRINCESS
I was a friend and admirer of her mother, Monsieur - the great American actress, Linda Arden.

Poirot's eyes widen - in admiration?

POIROT
(dramatically)
"Why did you bring these daggers from the place?"

PRINCESS
Is that a quotation or a question?

POIROT
A quotation, Madame. I saw her twice as Lady Macbeth in London.

142 Continued

PRINCESS
She was the greatest tragic actress of her day.

POIROT
Was? She is alive, Madame?

PRINCESS
Alive, but bedridden. The American doctors speak of disseminated sclerosis.. I shall try to see her once again.

POIROT
There was, if I remember, a younger daughter.

PRINCESS
Oh, yes. Much younger. I cannot recall her name because, whenever I paid a visit, she was always away at school.

POIROT
And what happened to the younger daughter?

PRINCESS
She married a Turk - or some such. We never spoke of it.

POIROT
What was Mrs Armstrong's maiden name?

PRINCESS
Mrs. Armstrong's maiden name was Greenwood.

Hildegarde momentarily raises hitherto downcast eyes.

PRINCESS
- the surname of her mother's first husband.

POIROT
Mme la Princesse, may I tax your memory - and indeed your patience - for a minute longer. There are other names in the Armstrong household that I should be grateful to know.

The Princess graciously but unenthusiastically nods.

142 Continued

POIROT
Am I right in recalling there was a secretary?

143 SEPIA FLASHBACK - NEWSPAPER PHOTO

A young girl turns away from camera as she helps the distraught Mrs. Armstrong disembarking from plane.

144 COMPARTMENT No.14. (COLOUR)

PRINCESS
Of course there was a secretary.

A pause.

POIROT
Her name, Madame?

PRINCESS
(tapping her head)
Miss... Miss... My memory is not what it - ah, yes. A Miss Freebody.

POIROT
And her first name?

Another pause.

PRINCESS
I have no notion. One does not address secretaries by their first names. Except, possibly, in amorous circumstances...

Bianchi hides a smile.

PRINCESS
(sternly)
... of which there were none. The Armstrongs were a devoted couple.

POIROT
Was there not a gallant chauffeur - ?

145 SEPIA FLASHBACK SCENE 14

The Cadillac crashes into a tree.

146 COMPARTMENT NO. 14 (COLOUR)

PRINCESS
(shaking head)
There was, but I never used him. I had my own.

POIROT
Was he the only male servant?

147 SEPIA FLASHBACK SCENE 9

Henchman coshing Manservant.

148 COMPARTMENT 14 (COLOUR)

PRINCESS
I remember occasionally seeing another. I think he was formerly the Colonel's Indian - how do you call it? - Orderly. A sikh or some such. His name, as with all Asians, was unpronounceable.

POIROT
And Mrs Armstrong's personal maid? The one who was wrongly suspected of complicity in the kidnapping and killed herself?

PRINCESS
(indicating Hildegarde)
I always travel with my own personal maid. There was no need to speak with Mrs. Armstrong's.

POIROT
(brightly)
Then doubtless Fraulein Schmidt will recollect her name.

A silence in which Hildegarde looks at the Princess, who (since Poirot is watching?) looks unhelpfully at her blood-red fingernails.

POIROT
Surely, Fraulein, as one lady's maid to another, you conversed as equals below stairs?

HILDEGARDE
Ja, naturlich! But ladies' maids were often called only by their Christian names.

148 Continued

POIROT
And what was hers?

HILDEGARDE
(with a little break in her voice)
Paulette.

She blows her nose.

POIROT
("not noticing")
Finally there was the Nurse.

149 SEPIA FLASHBACK SCENE 3

Nurse, unrecognisably gagged, blindfolded and bound to her chair.

150 COMPARTMENT 14 (COLOUR)

PRINCESS
I had no need of a nurse. That is an ordeal still to come.

POIROT
(himself smiling)
You never smile, Madame la Princesse.

PRINCESS
(rising with help of stick)
My doctor has advised against it.

Bianchi also rises. Poirot has never sat down.

PRINCESS
Hildegarde, be so kind as to give me two aspirin and ask the Dining Car attendant to bring me a glass of tea. Then you may retire to your compartment. I will ring if I need you.

As Hildegarde curtseys and goes to procure aspirin from a little medicine-chest:

POIROT
There is no reason for us to fatigue you further, Madame. You have been of the utmost help.

150 Continued

Both he and Bianchi kiss her frail, extended hand, and Poirot opens the door for Hildegarde who precedes them on her errand.

CUT TO

151 SHOOTING UP CORRIDOR

as Hildegarde recedes towards Dining Car. Poirot shuts the door of No.14. Then, in an urgent undertone to Bianchi:

POIROT
Go back to the Athens Coach and tell Pierre to summon Colonel Arbuthnot in... five minutes. I want a word with the maid.

As Bianchi EXITS SHOT down the train, Poirot strolls up towards the Dining Car into which Hildegarde has now vanished. He stops with his back to her second-class compartment (No.5-6) and ostensibly surveys the bleak view from the corridor-window opposite. Within a few seconds, footsteps herald Hildegarde's return. As he turns to face her, she looks pardonably alarmed.

POIROT
(soothing)
Fraulein Schmidt, might I speak with you about a small matter in the privacy of your compartment?
(seeing her look even more alarmed)
You may leave the door ajar.

She nervously ushers him into:

APARTMENT NO.5-6 (*)

POIROT
I observed how moved you were at the mention of Mrs Armstrong's maid, Marie.

HILDEGARDE
She had a sweet nature, Monsieur. We were deep friends.

POIROT
Have you by any chance a photograph or a snapshot of her in your possession?

---

(*) We can redress McQueen's compartment, which is structurally identical.

151 Continued

HILDEGARDE
(brightening)
Oh, yes, Monsieur. I never travel without my photo-box. It helps to pass the evenings.

She reaches for a suitcase on the unused upper-berth and pulls it down, refusing Poirot's help.

HILDEGARDE
(setting case on floor)
No, no, Monsieur. I am strong.

Then she lifts the lid of the suitcase... and screams. Poirot, startled slams-shut the compartment-door with one hand and gently stops her mouth with the other. In this position, he looks down on:

152 POV TOPSHOT: A WAGON-LIT CONDUCTOR'S FOLDED UNIFORM

POIROT
(releasing Hildegarde)
Be calm! This could be your salvation and that of every passenger in the Calais Coach including your mistress. When did you last open the suitcase?

HILDEGARDE
After Belgrade, Monsieur - when Pierre summoned me to my mistress. I took out a volume of Goethe in case she wished me to read her to sleep.

Poirot has pulled out the uniform - cap, tunic and trousers - leaving Hildegarde free to rootle in the photo-box, during:

POIROT
Too stout for Pierre. And yes! There is a button missing from the tunic - the button found by Mrs Hubbard - and a pass-key in the trouser pocket.

HILDEGARDE
(straightening)
Here is the photo, Monsieur.

Snapshot-sized. We could show it, of course; but perhaps it would be better only to show its effect on other people.

152 Continued

POIROT
And this pretty, innocent girl threw herself out of -

Hildegarde feels rapidly for her handkerchief and Poirot has the presence of mind to proffer her (from his pocket) the delicate square of cambric.

POIROT
Use this, Fraulein. I found it in the corridor and thought it must be yours because it bears the initial "H".

Even before she takes it:

HILDEGARDE
No, no, Monsieur. This is the handkerchief, not of a maid but a great lady.

POIROT
Like your mistress?

Now she examines it carefully, and shakes her head.

HILDEGARDE
This is her style but not her handkerchief. I know all her linen. Besides the initial is wrong.

POIROT
What is the Princess's first name?

HILDEGARDE
Natalia, Monsieur. It is a Russian name.

As she returns the handkerchief:

POIROT
(re-pocketing it)
Then I must keep it until we find the right owner. Might I also, until the evening...
(holding snapshot)
... keep the photo? It is so important, in this difficult case, to absorb the atmosphere of that happy household before the tragedy struck. I promise to return it.

152 Continued

HILDEGARDE
Of course, Monsieur. That does not worry me. But this...
(touching uniform over Poirot's arm)
... this does. Do you think I shall be suspected of hiding it in my suitcase?

POIROT
Fraulein Schmidt, I am as sure you did not hide the uniform as I am sure that you are a loyal and devoted friend to your mistress, a comfort, a solace... and even a good cook.
(as she wanly smiles)
You see? You are a good cook, are you not?

HILDEGARDE
(diffidently)
All my ladies have said so. I -

She stops, her mouth open, looking frightened again. We CLOSE to CU of this, and HOLD it over:

POIROT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Auf wiedersehen!!

CUT TO

153 CORRIDOR POIROT (CARRYING UNIFORM) CLOSES DOOR OF NO. 5-6.

He accidentally drops the peaked cap, sticks it somewhat incongruously on his domed head and is passing his own compartment when (with his free hand) he feels for his cigarette-case, clicks it open and finds it empty. So, in great good-humour, he enters:

154 COMPARTMENT NO. 9

Lifts the unlocked lid of his suitcase and stares incredulously down at:

155 POV TOPSHOT THE MYSTERIOUS KIMONO

White with red dragons, and neatly folded.

156 MCS: POIROT AND SUITCASE

For the second time, we hear him laugh out loud as he collects the

156 Continued

kimono on his free arm and, from beneath it in his suitcase, extracts a packet of Gaulloises. At this moment the train (Poirot reacts) again whistles thrice.

CUT TO

157 EXT. GUARD ON SNOW-COVERED CARRIAGE-ROOFTOP

He peers through binoculars raised in his left hand, as train emits three more whistles which are answered (louder than before) by six notes from a nearer horn. With his free hand, Guard pulls his furled green flag from his Wellington boot and waves it in visual acknowledgment. Help has been sighted.

CUT TO

158 PULLMAN POIROT IN DOORWAY CONFRONTING DOCTOR AND BIANCHI

Peaked cap perched jauntily on his head, a Conductor's tunic and trousers over one arm and a lady's kimono over the other. He disposes each item, with the grace of a window-designer, over the back of a sofa; and we PAN him into shot with:

DOCTOR
What the devil - ?

POIROT
(delighted)
The pace quickens.

BIANCHI
(looking out of window)
And time grows shorter. If we do not unmask the murderer by the time the train reaches Brod, the Yugoslavian police will take over - and the innocent will suffer with the guilty.

POIROT
(to Doctor; cheerfully)
Then summon Colonel Arbuthnot.

PING! Arbuthnot, wearing tweeds, a stiff white collar and an old Wellingtonian tie, enters with a no-nonsense air - and instantly spots the display on the sofa.

158 Continued

ARBUTHNOT
You opening a dress-shop?

POIROT
(icily indicating chair)
No. We are closing an enquiry. Where is Shimoga?

ARBUTHNOT
(precipitately sitting)
I beg your pardon?

POIROT
Shimoga? Where is it?

ARBUTHNOT
Well, it's a bit off my track. I'm a North West Frontier man myself, but Shimoga's down south. In Mysore. Why?

POIROT
Does it possess a Mission?

ARBUTHNOT
How the hell should I know? India's pustular with Missions.

POIROT
You are returning on leave from India to England.

ARBUTHNOT
Yes.

POIROT
Why overland?

ARBUTHNOT
Why not?

POIROT
Because the sea-route by P and O is more usual.

ARBUTHNOT
I chose to come overland for reasons of my own.

158 Continued

POIROT
Colonel Arbuthnot, in a murder-enquiry no witness's reasons are exclusively his own.

ARBUTHNOT
I stopped for one night to see Ur of the Chaldees and for three days in Baghdad with the A.O.C. - who happens to be a friend of mine.

POIROT
The English Miss Debenham also comes from Baghdad. Did you first meet her there?

ARBUTHNOT
No, I did not. I first met Miss Debenham when she and I shared the railway convoy car from Kirkuk to Nissibin. Why d'you ask?

POIROT
It is possible that the murder was committed by a woman - or even by a man and a woman in collaboration. Would you, from your acquaintanceship with Miss Debenham, have thought it possible that she might be physically or emotionally capable of -

ARBUTHNOT
That's a bloody irregular question.

POIROT
I know. But I ask it.

ARBUTHNOT
Miss Debenham is not a woman.

Bianchi gasps. The Doctor frowns. Even Poirot raises his eyebrows.

ARBUTHNOT
She is a lady.

POIROT
Which precludes her from being a murderess?

ARBUTHNOT
Dammit, the man was a perfect stranger. She'd never seen him before.

158 Continued

POIROT
She told you so?

ARBUTHNOT
We agreed he looked more than a bit of a bounder. Is that to be used in evidence against her?

POIROT
You feel warmly in the matter.

ARBUTHNOT
(cold stare)
I don't know what you're driving at.

POIROT
Then let us be practical and drive at facts. Did you know Colonel Armstrong?

ARBUTHNOT
Not to speak to. You see, his outfit and mine wouldn't have mixed much. I'm Indian Army. And he was British Army serving in India -

POIROT
Royal Scots. (*)

ARBUTHNOT
(surprised)
How did you - ?

POIROT
It was in the papers when he shot himself after the kidnapping.

ARBUTHNOT
Ah. Rotten show. Thought he'd be tougher than that. After all, he got a D.S.O. and an M.C. in France.

Poirot stares at him ... in ignorance?

ARBUTHNOT
(as though to a child)
Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross.

---

(*) See Page 62 Scene 115

158 Continued

POIROT
(sternly)
Mon Colonel! Ratchett was responsible for four deaths: the murder of the Armstrong child, which resulted in the death of Mrs. Armstrong while giving premature birth of a still-born baby; and for the subsequent suicide of Col. Armstrong in the face of multiple and intolerable bereavement. I would have understood his action even if (in addition to a D.S.O. and an M.C.) he had possessed a V.C. which stands (as you may know) for Victoria Cross and is awarded "For Valour".

Arbuthnot has the face to look briefly ashamed but quickly recovers.

ARBUTHNOT
Then in my opinion Ratchett deserved what he got, though I'd sooner have seen him properly tried by jury and legally executed.

POIROT
You prefer law and order to private vengeance?

ARBUTHNOT
Well, you can't go about having blood feuds and stabbing each other like a lot of hairy Corsicans, can you? Say what you like, trial by twelve good men and true is a sound system.

POIROT
We believe the murder was committed at 1.15. What were you doing then?

ARBUTHNOT
Yarning with young whatsisname - McQueen - in his compartment. He was interested about the future of India, but a bit impractical. He thought the British ought to move out.

POIROT
Did either of you leave the compartment at any time?

CUT TO

159 SEPIA FLASHBACK (WITH WIND EFFECTS) ILLUSTRATING

ARBUTHNOT'S VOICE OVER
Yes. We both hopped out at Vincovci about midnight - for a stretch and a breather. But it was so bloody cold we hopped straight back in again.

POIROT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Wasn't the train-door locked?

ARBUTHNOT'S VOICE OVER
We only had to lift the cross-bar.

POIROT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Did you lower the cross-bar when you got in again?

As we observe that they did not:

CUT TO

160 INQUIRY HQ. (COLOUR)

ARBUTHNOT
(pondering)
No. I can't remember that we did. Should we have?

BIANCHI
Technically, yes. An unauthorised passenger could have entered the Calais Coach without a reservation.

POIROT
And how long did you stay... "yarning", after that?

ARBUTHNOT
Till 1.30 at least.
(smiling, producing pipe)
It was what I call a three-pipe yarn.

POIROT
You are the only passenger in the Calais Coach who smokes a pipe.
(aside)
Doctor?

As Doctor approaches with exhibit:

160 Continued

ARBUTHNOT
So it would seem.

POIROT
Then this must be your pipe-cleaner.

ARBUTHNOT
It's the same brand.

POIROT
It was found in an ash-tray...

CUT TO

161 SEPIA FLASHBACK TOPSHOT OF ASHTRAY FROM SCENE 109

The two different matches, the charred paper and... the pipecleaner.

POIROT'S VOICE (O.S.)
... by the dead man's bedside.

CUT TO

162 INQUIRY HQ (COLOUR)

ARBUTHNOT
(truculent)
Then someone planted it there. It's a used pipe-cleaner. Or are you suggesting I'm fool enough to have entered Ratchett's room, murdered him, cleaned my pipe, dropped my cleaner in the ashtray, lit a fresh pipe, dropped the match, and left?

POIROT
No, Colonel Arbuthnot.

ARBUTHNOT
Anyway I couldn't have been there at 1.15. I was still talking to whatsisname - McQueen. He'll bear me out. So will Pierre.

POIROT
Yes, Colonel Arbuthnot.
(unexpectedly to Doctor)
Call Miss Debenham.

162 Continued

Arbuthnot's truculence shrivels to anxiety. PING!

ARBUTHNOT
Can I stay?

POIROT
(opening corridor-door)
No, Colonel Arbuthnot.

We glimpse Pierre in corridor as Arbuthnot exits; then PAN Poirot back to his table, where Mary Debenham composedly awaits interrogation.

POIROT
(almost in one breath)
Miss Debenham, forgive me, please be seated, I must be brief, you met Colonel Arbuthnot in Baghdad and fell in love with each other WHY -
(striking table-top)
- must the English always conceal even their most impeccable emotions?

MARY
(almost smiling)
To answer your observations in order: Of course; thank you; yes; yes; and I don't know.

POIROT
Then let me remind you of what you do know: that, on the Bosphorus ferry-boat, I overheard a part of your conversation with the Colonel.

CUT TO

163 SEPIA FLASHBACK SCENE 28

ARBUTHNOT
But, Mary -

MARY
Not now. Not now. When it's all over. When it's behind us. Then...

BACK TO

164 INQUIRY HQ (COLOUR)

POIROT
When what was all over, Miss Debenham?
When what was behind you?
(silence)
Was it some task that had to be performed?
(silence)
Some ordeal that had to be endured?
(silence)
Some dark deed that had to be despatched?

MARY
M Poirot, I am not at liberty to answer any of those questions.

POIROT
Not here on this train, perhaps. But when the Yugoslav police take over an unsolved murder-case, at Brod, you will not remain "at liberty" unless you answer the question.

MARY
I can always call my lawyers long-distance. This is a private matter between the Colonel and myself.

POIROT
Miss Debenham, in a murder-case no matter is private, and evasion breeds suspicion.

His voice has gradually risen, and we now hear two more voices rising in muffled altercation from the corridor outside. Poirot, far from objecting to this, seems almost to be engineering it.

PIERRE'S VOICE (O.S.)
(muffled)
Mon Colonel, M Poirot has expressly forbidden -

POIROT
(loudly to Mary)
So answer my question!

ARBUTHNOT'S VOICE (O.S.)
(muffled)
M Poirot has no right to drag private matters into the light of -

164 Continued

POIROT
(louder)
When what was "all over"?

ARBUTHNOT'S VOICE (O.S.)
I'm going in.

POIROT
When what was "behind you"?

PIERRE'S VOICE (O.S.)
No, mon Colonel.

ARBUTHNOT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Who's to stop me?

A scuffle outside, as we

CUT TO

165 BRIEF FIGHT IN CORRIDOR ARBUTHNOT'S FIST CONNECTS WITH PIERRE'S CHIN.

Pierre's head jerks back and hits the door, whose handle Arbuthnot turns, prior to kicking it open.

CUT TO

166 INQUIRY HQ POIROT (BACK TO US, IN FG) SEES PIERRE TOTTER AND SLUMP TO THE COMPARTMENT FLOOR

Arbuthnot steps over him and strides towards Poirot's table, where Mary has risen.

POIROT
(genially)
Ah, come in, Colonel. I was expecting you.

We PULL BACK to include Bianchi and Doctor advancing from far B.G.

BIANCHI
Dio mio! Another murder!

ARBUTHNOT
Bosh! I only clipped him on the jaw.

166 Continued

POIROT
Doctor?

DOCTOR
(already kneeling by Pierre)
He's coming round.

POIROT
Then kindly resuscitate him -
(indicating Second Room)
- in the waiting-room.

Doctor busies himself with this, during:

POIROT
Now, Colonel. What can I do for you?

ARBUTHNOT
Keep your hands off Miss Debenham.

POIROT
I was not aware that I was keeping my hands on Miss Debenham. I asked her a simple question which she refused to answer.

ARBUTHNOT
So I heard.

POIROT
Then perhaps you can answer it for her.

A pause, during which Doctor assists Pierre into Second Room, Bianchi re-seats himself, and Arbuthnot ponders.

ARBUTHNOT
Can you give me your solemn oath as a foreigner -

Bianchi splutters.

- that if the answer has nothing to do with the murder, you'll treat it confidentially?

POIROT
I will.

166 Continued

ARBUTHNOT
Six months ago (before I'd even met Miss Debenham) my memsahib -

BIANCHI
Comé?

ARBUTHNOT
- my wife expressed herself bored not only at living in India but at living with me, and asked me to provide her with a divorce. In view of my position as Commanding Officer Twelfth Gurkhas, I refused. Had I not, I should have lost my command. My wife returned to England, where there is irrefutable evidence that she has been persistently unfaithful to me. I have therefore instituted divorce proceedings in which she is cited as the guilty party. When those proceedings are "behind us", when those proceedings are "all over", I propose to marry Miss Debenham. Meanwhile it is of vital importance, under English law, that our behaviour should provide no evidence for counter-proceedings by my wife. Does that answer your question?

POIROT
(thoughtfully)
It is certainly an answer.
(to returning Doctor)
Is Pierre sufficiently recovered to - ?

DOCTOR
Fully.

He presses bell-push once. PING!

ARBUTHNOT
Then may we leave?

POIROT
You may - with the assurance that my foreigner's lips shall be sealed.

ARBUTHNOT
Thanks. Sorry if I hurt the lad. Provocation.

166 Continued

He opens the corridor-door for Mary, and shuts it behind them.

DOCTOR
They could have done it together. She is strong. She has what you call hidden fires. But where is the motive? Why did you not ask if she had been to America?

POIROT
(curtly)
Because I did not need to.

He signals Doctor to press bell-push. PING! A bruised Pierre ushers Foscarelli and is about to withdraw, when

POIROT
Pierre!

PIERRE
Monsieur?

POIROT
Le Colonel s'excuse de son attaque.

PIERRE
(rubbing jaw; coldly)
Merci, Monsieur.

He withdraws, and Poirot (standing) motions a beaming Foscarelli to be seated.

POIROT
(scanning passport)
Signor Foscarelli, I shall not detain you long. You are a naturalised American subject?

FOSCARELLI
You bet.

POIROT
Since ...?

FOSCARELLI
Seven years. Ah, mi ricordo del giorno preciso, quando mia Mamma -

166 Continued

BIANCHI
(sternly)
Faccia di rispondere alle questioni!
(to Poirot)
Otherwise he will detain you longer than you would have detained him.

POIROT
You are a motor-car salesman?

FOSCARELLI
You bet. American automobiles to Italians.

POIROT
Did you ever meet Cassetti?

FOSCARELLI
Not on-na your sweet-alife. Era Mafioso.

BIANCHI
He was of the Mafia.

POIROT
Who do you think killed him?

FOSCARELLI
Un altro Mafioso. They are always killing each other. With a knife or a gun.
(miming machine-gun)
Pum-pum-pum-pum-pum- PAF!

Suddenly, like an uncanny echo, we hear the Pum-pum-pum! of running footsteps culminating in the PAF! of a knock on the door, which bursts open to reveal Mrs Hubbard brandishing a blood-encrusted dagger in her hand. A moment of total silence. Then:

POIROT
(almost to himself; softly)
"Why have you brought this dagger from the place?"

MRS HUBBARD
(double-take)
Because it was in my makeup-bag.

166 Continued

FOSCARELLI
(triumphant)
What did I say? Guns or knives! Is a vendetta between two Mafiosi!

POIROT
(conversationally, but in fact still quoting, to Mrs Hubbard)
"Give me the dagger."

He proffers it to the Doctor for examination; and continues with Mrs Hubbard.

POIROT
When did you last open your makeup-bag?

MRS HUBBARD
Yesterday evening when I took everything out.

POIROT
If you had taken everything out, why did you need to re-open it?

MRS HUBBARD
Because I was putting something back in.

POIROT
Mrs Hubbard, you may set your mind at rest.

He picks up the conductor's tunic from the sofa and displays it.

MRS HUBBARD
The missing button!

POIROT
Precisely. And I can assure you that the owner of the tunic is not now on the train. Are you going back to the dining car?

MRS HUBBARD
I'll say I am. D'you think I could face my compartment so soon after ... this?

166 Continued

POIROT
Then would you be so kind as to ask the Chief Attendant to re-dispose the chairs and tables so that Signor Bianchi, Dr Constantine and myself can confront the passengers with the solution of the murder?

Stunned astonishment from Bianchi and Doctor, who nearly drops the dagger, as Poirot ushers an incredulous Mrs Hubbard to the corridor-door, which he opens.

MRS HUBBARD
(from corridor)
I just can't wait to see my daughter's face, when she hears -

This once, Poirot has no time for politeness. He shuts the door in her face.

FOSCARELLI
(beaming)
I'elp-a with the risoluzione?

POIROT
Yes. If you briefly answer two more questions.

FOSCARELLI
Shoot.

POIROT
(indicating diagram)
Did Mr Beddoes ever leave your compartment on the night of the murder?

FOSCARELLI
No. 'E grunt like a peeg in pain with 'is teeth ...
(tapping his own)
... an' make the 'ole place stink of gardfani.

BIANCHI
Cloves.

POIROT
Have you ever been in private service?

166 Continued

FOSCARELLI
No.

POIROT
Thank you. You may go.

As door shuts:

POIROT
(to Doctor)
Enfin?

DOCTOR
(setting pocket magnifying-glass beside dagger)
The blood's human. Its coagulation is consistent with the suspected time of death. The dagger (which tourists can buy cheaply by the dozen in Stamboul bazaars) could - probably in at least two different hands - have inflicted all the wounds.

BIANCHI
(to Poirot)
And you know who inflicted them.

POIROT
Almost. Our last interrogation will be something of a gamble. If it succeeds - then I know.

He presses the bell-push. PING! Pierre ushers in Mr Hardman and retires, as Poirot indicates chair to the loudly-check-suited, pink-shirted, flashy tie-pinned, gum-chewing American.

POIROT
(scanning passport)
You are Cyrus B. Hardman, a theatrical agent?

HARDMAN
No.

Sensation!

HARDMAN
I mean I'm not a theatrical agent.

166 Continued

POIROT
(nonplussed)
But -

HARDMAN
(indicating passport)
That's a phony. Issued to me under licence by Pinkertons.

POIROT
The detective agency?

HARDMAN
Stamboul Branch. Ratchett asked them for an American bodyguard. They sent me.
(ruefully)
I wasn't so hot, was I?

POIROT
Can you prove that this was the reason for your journey?

Hardman flicks a printed card across the table. Poirot reads it; nods; pockets it; and, from the same pocket, extracts the snapshot which he flicks, face downwards, across the table. As Hardman lifts it with the caution of a poker-player:

CUT TO

167 CU POIROT INTENSELY WATCHING:

168 POV CU HARDMAN

Eyes lowered, looking at the snapshot whose detail we need not see. We HOLD him, thus, for five seconds. Then:

HARDMAN
(a mere murmur)
Paulette ... Paulette Michel.

When at last he raises his eyes, they are brimming with tears.

HARDMAN
(pathetic throwaway)
Now I can stop pretending to be anything.

168 Continued

His soft-spoken voice is his own.

QUICK TIME-DISSOLVE TO

169 DINING CAR WITH ALL TWELVE PASSENGERS

Seated at the forward end of the car and awaiting, like a hushed and expectant audience, the brisk entrance of:

170 REVERSE POV SHOT:

A. Pierre carrying conductor's uniform, kimono and dagger. He lays all three on a table containing other exhibits and discreetly withdraws to make place for:

B. Bianchi, who sits at our RIGHT of a central double-table.

C. Doctor, who sits at table's LEFT.

D. Poirot, who sits at table's CENTRE - having first ushered in Hardman and motioned him to a chair set somewhat apart from the other passengers, in whom his solitary appearance excites a murmur of speculation. (Can Hardman be the murderer?)

BIANCHI quickly quashes the murmur by slapping the table top with the flat of his hand.

BIANCHI
May I respectfully suggest that there should be no talking while M Poirot addresses you? If anyone wishes to make a statement, he or she may do so at the meeting's end.

Poirot rises.

POIROT
(as Pierre pins up compartment-diagram)
Ladies and Gentlemen. You are all aware that a repulsive murderer has himself been repulsively (and perhaps deservedly) murdered. How and why? Here is the simple answer.

From now on we INTERCUT CLOSE SHOTS of involved passengers, of relevant exhibits and of the Wagon-Lit diagram.

170 Continued

POIROT
Mr Foscarelli has testified that Cassetti (alias Ratchett) was a member of the Mafia. There is also testimony supporting the theory that the murderer was a stranger to us all. Mrs Hubbard was conscious of a man in her compartment soon after 1.15 a.m. She later found, near her bedside, the button of a Wagon-Lit conductor who cannot have been Pierre because only half an hour ago Fraulein Schmidt discovered (planted in her suitcase) a conductor's cap, trousers and tunic which could not conceivably have fitted Pierre and from which a button was in fact missing.

(as Pierre displays tunic and button)

In the pocket of the tunic was a conductor's pass-key. Later still, Mrs Hubbard discovered this bloodstained dagger -

(exhibited)

- in her makeup-bag. Dr Constantine confirms that it could have been the murderer's weapon. The obvious inference is that the stranger (disguised as a conductor) boarded the train - probably by one of the local carriages - at Vincovci, made his way by means of the pass-key to Ratchett's room, stabbed him to death as is the Mafia custom, "planted" the dagger and the uniform - and departed (since the train was now halted in a snowdrift) through this door -

(diagram)

- which had earlier been neglectfully left unlocked by Colonel Arbuthnot and Mr McQueen when they took a breather together on the platform at Vincovci. By then a strong wind was blowing and the murderer's footsteps would have been swiftly obliterated by the drifting snow. Who was he? I am inclined to agree with Mr Foscarelli -

FOSCARELLI
(beaming)
Ah!

BIANCHI
(almost his only contribution)
Sh-h-h-h!

170 Continued

POIROT
- that he was a rival member of the Mafia exacting private vengeance for a vendetta whose precise nature the Yugoslav police. will doubtless identify.

Poirot sits down - to the dismayed astonishment of Bianchi and Doctor, but to the approval of the relieved Passengers. Foscarelli's "Bravo!" even starts a ripple of applause from all but the Princess.

BIANCHI
But -

FOSCARELLI
(in revenge)
Sh-h-h-h!

BIANCHI
(ignoring him)
Is that all?

POIROT
No. It is not. I said "Here is the simple answer." There is also a more complex one.

Bianchi and Doctor brighten. The Passengers do not. Indeed each Passenger must now strive to conceal any tell-tale reaction which might suggest his or her own guilt or that of another.

POIROT
(sternly to Bianchi)
But remember my first solution, when you have heard my second.

He formidably rises again to address the company.

CAMERA continues to ROVE, during:

POIROT
Let us assume what is perfectly possible: that the mysterious stranger, with his convenient pass-key, did not exist. We know that the communicating door, between the Athens and the Calais coach, was locked regularly every night after dinner. The murder must then have been committed by some person or persons in this coach and

170 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
therefore at present ...
(surveying them)
... in this dining-car. Let us for the moment not answer the question "How?" but the question "Why?" which will tell us how. It was not surprising that every single one of you should have heard about the notorious Armstrong case. But I confess to a mild surprise when Mr McQueen - the first passenger whom I interrogated - admitted under emotional stress that he had actually known Mrs Armstrong - albeit very slightly.

171 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 125

MCQUEEN
She was ... gentle and frightened. But not too frightened to take an interest in a seventeen-year-old boy who wanted to go on the stage. She even said she'd write to ...

As he hesitates, we

CUT BACK TO:

172 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
Was McQueen lying when he denied ever having known that Ratchett was Cassetti? Or did he become Ratchett's secretary as part of a deliberate plan to avenge Mrs Armstrong's death? And did this plan involve other avengers? Or was his presence on the train a pure coincidence? Only by interrogating the other passengers could I hope to see the light - but when I began to question them, the light, as Macbeth would have said ...
(looking at Mrs Hubbard)
..., thickened. When I told the Princess Dragomiroff that I knew she was Sonia Armstrong's godmother, her answers to my subsequent questions about the Armstrong household smelt strongly of inaccuracy and evasion. Even I remembered more from

172 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
the newspaper reports than she from her frequent visits. Was there not a chauffeur?

Now, in QUICK-TEMPO CUTS:

173 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 146

PRINCESS
There was, but I never used him. I had my own.

174 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
Evasion! I asked her the name of Mrs Armstrong's personal maid.

175 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 148

PRINCESS
I always travel with my own personal maid. There was no need to speak with Mrs Armstrong's.

POIROT
Evasion! I asked for particulars of the manservant.

176 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 148

PRINCESS
I think he was formerly the Colonel's Indian - how do you call it? - Orderly.

177 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
Inaccuracy! Colonel Armstrong was an officer of the British Army in India. He would have had a British batman (like Private Beddoes) to serve his personal needs. Only officers of the Indian army (like Colonel Arbuthnot) have Indian Orderlies. I asked the name of Sonia Armstrong's much younger sister.

178 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 142

PRINCESS
I cannot recall her name because, whenever I paid a visit, she was always away at school - where she did not do very well. In the holidays, she had a governess who was also Sonia's part-time secretary.

179 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
Unbelievable evasion! I asked the name of the governess.

180 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 142

PRINCESS
(tapping head)
My memory is not what it - ah, yes! A Miss Freebody.

181 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
(vehemently)
Ah, no! Je m'en doute! The Princess, it seems is playing the psychological game of word-association. Freebody is the Junior Partner in one of London's most famous and opulent ladies' stores - of a sort which the Princess may herself patronise. The name of the Senior Partner is ... Debenham. Debenham and Freebody! Was the Princess "covering up" for our Miss Debenham? who is also a governess?
(pointing to Mary)
Can she tell us the name of Mrs Armstrong's younger sister?

CUT TO:

182 CLOSE SHOT MARY EXPRESSIONLESS, LOOKING AT:

183 CLOSE SHOT PRINCESS, EXPRESSIONLESS, LOOKING AT:

184 CLOSE SHOT BIANCHI

beginning to look very uneasily at the questioner, as we PAN to:

184 Continued

POIROT
Then I will tell you both her Christian and her maiden name. Her maiden name is marked clearly on her husband's passport: "Grunwald". When I asked Princess Dragomiroff to give me the maiden name of her own god-daughter, Mrs Armstrong, she could not possibly (as a god-mother) plead ignorance of this. She replied.

185 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM END OF SCENE 142

PRINCESS
Sonia's maiden name was ... Greenwood.

186 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
Grunwald is the German for Greenwood. The Princess's hesitation persuades me that Grunwald was the true maiden name of her god-daughter, Mrs Armstrong ...

Countess Andrenyi's hand flies to her mouth - apparently to mask a sudden cough.

POIROT
... and that the Countess Andrenyi is Mrs Armstrong's surviving sister. Her Christian name is Helena (*). Not Elena (*) but Helena. And where did she lose her Christian name's initial "H"?

From the table of exhibits, he snatches up:

187 SEPIA FLASH-INSERT FROM SCENE 135: PASSPORT-PAGE

POIROT'S VOICE OVER (O.S.)
She lost it under a convenient grease-spot on her husband's passport.

188 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
Why was the grease-spot purposely applied? Because she and her husband were afraid that ...

---

(*) Poirot rightly pronounces Hellena in English and Elayna in German.

188 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
(taking cambric from table)
this handkerchief, bearing the initial "H" and found on the floor by the murdered man's bed, might lead me to suspecting her of complicity in the murder.

COUNT
(leaping to his feet)
I swear before God and on my word of honour as a gentleman that this handkerchief does not belong to my wife.

POIROT
(soothingly)
Of course it does not. Nor does it belong ...
(accentuating H's)
... to Mrs Harriet Belinda Hubbard; nor to Fraulein Hildegarde Schmidt, whose finest quality is her loyalty.

189 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 152 HILDEGARDE, POIROT

HILDEGARDE
No, no, Monsieur. This is the handkerchief not of a maid but a great lady.

POIROT
Like your mistress?

Now she examines it carefully and shakes her head.

HILDEGARDE
This is her style but not her handkerchief. I know all her linen. Besides the initial is wrong.

POIROT
What is the Princess's first name?

HILDEGARDE
Natalia, Monsieur. It is a Russian name.

190 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
In the Russian or Kyrillic Alphabet, a capital "H" is printed like a capital "N".

190 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
(bowing to Princess)
Mme la Princesse, should this costly handkerchief cease to remain an exhibit, it will be returned to your loyal maid for laundering.

CUT TO:

191 CLOSE SHOT: PRINCESS

very nearly (but not quite) registering a smile. We PULL BACK to include:

POIROT
(to Princess)
Or is Hildegarde Schmidt really your maid? I have perhaps a nose for the aura of fine food. I laid a trap.

192 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM END OF SCENE 152

POIROT
Fraulein Schmidt, I am as sure you did not hide the uniform as I am sure that you are a loyal and devoted friend to your mistress, a comfort, a solace ... and even a good cook.
(as she wanly smiles)
You see? You are a good cook, are you not?

HILDEGARDE
(diffidently)
All my ladies have said so. I -

She stops, her mouth open, looking frightened. We CLOSE TO CU of this and

CUT TO

193 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
If you are employed as a lady's maid, your ladies have little chance of learning whether you are a good cook - as good a cook as Fraulein Schmidt must have been ... to the Armstrong household.

194 HILDEGARDE LOOKING MUTELY APOLOGETIC AT:

195 PRINCESS LOOKING STERNLY AT:

196 BIANCHI LOOKING APPEALINGLY AT:

197 POIROT

who totally ignores him.

POIROT

Enfin! Whom do we now have in the Calais coach that knows or could have known the Armstrong household? We have:

1. McQueen who became boyishly devoted to Mrs Armstrong at the time of the kidnapping.

2. The Princess Dragomiroff, who was Mrs Armstrong's devoted godmother.

3. The Countess Andrenyi, who was Mrs Armstrong's devoted younger sister.

4. The Count Andrenyi, who is Helena's devoted husband and Mrs Armstrong's devoted brother-in-law.

5. Hildegarde Schmidt, who was Mrs Armstrong's devoted cook.

6. Mary Debenham who was once Mrs Armstrong's devoted secretary.

ARBUTHNOT
(rising in wrath)

Miss Debenham's inclusion is based on the flimsiest -

Bianchi slaps a disciplinary hand on the table.

POIROT
(icily)

Under interrogation, Miss Debenham denied that she had ever lived in America. On another matter, she said:

198 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 164

MARY
I can always call my lawyers long-distance.

199 DINING CAR

POIROT
An Englishwoman, who had never lived in America, would have said: "I can always make a trunk-call to my solicitors."
(more amiably; as Arbuthnot subsides)
Tout de même, I must thank Colonel Arbuthnot for a remark which finally resolved all my own doubts and confusions about this extraordinary case. I set aside the curious fact that although he denied ever having spoken to Colonel Armstrong in India, he was able to remember in detail the decorations which Colonel Armstrong won years later in France. I prefer to remember his views on the British jury-system.

Over everyone's surprise:

CUT TO:

200 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM END OF SCENE 158

POIROT
You prefer law and order to private vengeance?

ARBUTHNOT
Well, you can't go about having blood-feuds and stabbing each other like a lot of hairy Corsicans, can you? Say what you like, trial by twelve good men and true is a sound system.

201 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
(looking at Mrs Hubbard)
"The iron tongue of midnight hath told ... TWELVE." Suddenly the number twelve began to toll in my mind like a great bell. Doctor, how many stab-wounds in Ratchett's body?

201 Continued

DOCTOR
Twelve.

POIROT
Mr McQueen! How many capital letters - each letter inscribed by a different hand - were contained in each of the two threatening messages you showed me on Ratchett's correspondence file?

202 SEPIA INSERT: THE TWO JUXTAPOSED MESSAGES FROM SCENE 102.

I KILL KILLERS

PREPARE TO DIE

Over this:

O.S. MCQUEEN'S VOICE
Twelve.

203 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
(as McQueen sits)
Colonel Arbuthnot! How many persons in a jury?

ARBUTHNOT
Twelve.

POIROT
Pierre Paul Michel!

Pierre rises from a far corner, frightened at the use of his full name.

POIROT
How many passengers in this coach - excluding myself and the murdered man?

PIERRE
Twelve, Monsieur.

POIROT
Show me your wallet.
(as Pierre hesitates in surprise)
Votre porte feuille!

203 Continued

Pierre threads his way to Poirot's table on which he sets down the wallet that Poirot searches - to extract a snapshot we need not see. As Poirot fumbles in his own pocket:

HARDMAN
(leaping up)
No!

POIROT
Mr Hardman, you may stand if you wish, but you may not talk. I swear on oath that, after you boarded the train, Mr Ratchett asked me to be his private bodyguard. Not you. And I refused.

From his pocket he produces a snapshot of a size identical with Pierre's and displays them both on the table-top, over which Pierre now breaks down in quiet but uncontrollable sobs.

204 HILDEGARDE

pathetically blowing her nose into a large, sensible handkerchief, which is not a mere wisp of cambric.

BACK TO:

205 POIROT, PIERRE

POIROT
(gently)
Your daughter Paulette, never died of scarlet fever, did she?

206 SEPIA (NEW MATERIAL) PAULETTE MICHEL'S SUICIDE

POIROT'S VOICE OVER (O.S.)
She threw herself out of her mistress's bedroom window.

207 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
(to Pierre)
They couldn't have done it without you, could they?
(exhibiting Conductor's uniform)

207 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
You, the procurer of this "disguise" for the mysterious member of the Mafia, who never existed - any more than the owner of this kimono ...
(displaying it)
... existed as a real character and not as a red herring to confuse and deceive me. Though I think I was not deceived.
(looking at Countess Andrenyi)
I have an eye for - how shall I say it? ...

208 SEPIA FLASHBACK OF SCENE 86 - THE KIMONO'D FIGURE EN ROUTE FOR W.C.

POIROT'S VOICE OVER (O.S.)
... the figure of a receding woman.

The Count looks daggers of disapproval at:

POIROT
Countess, your cosmopolitan accent showed a talent for mimicry which must have been inherited from your actress mother. But God knows from what implausible source ...
(turning)
... Miss Greta Ohlsson inherited an English vocabulary too ludicrous to be credited.

209 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 134

GRETA
I was born backwards. That is why I work in Africa as missionary teaching little brown babies more backwards than myself.

210 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
(to Greta)
You coined words like "bed-gown", yet you understand words like "emolument". I truly believe that you did look after "little brown babies" in your Mission at Shimoga - which is in India, by the way, not in Africa - but I suspect that you were "covering up" for

210 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
having once, before then, when you were in America, looked after a little white baby ... called Daisy.
(as her lip begins to tremble)
You were lucky only to be bound and gagged - not coshed like the manservant.
(after a whisper to the Doctor)
Mr Beddoes!

BEDDOES
Sir?

POIROT
You served in the British Army in Scotland. Colonel Armstrong was in the Royal Scots. Will you now have the goodness to stand in front of Doctor Constantine and give him your deepest "Butler's Bow"?

Beddoes imperturbably bows deeply to the Doctor who, with expert fingers feels the nape of the valet's bent neck. After a pause:

DOCTOR
Yes. There is an old contusion ...

BEDDOES
(straightening)
The result of a slight fracas in the Mess, Sir - over the quality of a pudding called "Spotted Dick".

POIROT
(dismissive gesture)
Thank you. But I think you have been spotted, too.
(as Beddoes retires)
Mr Foscarelli is knowledgeable about automobiles. I asked him if he had ever driven one in private service.

211 SEPIA FLASHBACK FROM SCENE 166

FOSCARELLI
No.

212 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
I think Mr Foscarelli's appalling English is more genuine than Miss Ohlsson's. I think he meant "yes".

BIANCHI
(uneasily muttering)
Think, think, think...

POIROT
(stung)
Yes! Think! What else can be done on a train isolated by a snowdrift - except think? If these people are not implicated in the crime, then why, under interrogation, have they all told me unnecessary but often stupid lies, lies inconsistent with each other? Why?

DOCTOR
(conciliatory)
Doubtless because you, M Poirot, were not expected on the train. They had very little time to concert their cover-stories.

POIROT
(appeased)
I was hoping that someone other than myself would say that.

We PAN all Suspects, during:

POIROT
Ladies and Gentlemen, we now come to my own reconstruction of the Night of the Murder, which is also the Night of the Red Herrings. I only wish I could do so with the consummate verve, the incomparable panache, the enthralling cadences, the delicate gestures and the evocative expressions of America's greatest tragic actress, Harriet Belinda - I mean Linda... ... ARDEN.

We ZOOM to:

MRS HUBBARD
(for the first time, softly)
I've always heard she wanted to play comedy

212 Continued

MRS HUBBARD (Cont)
parts. But her second husband wouldn't have it. (*)

POIROT
(looking at Mrs. Hubbard)
Dare one deduce that she has been cured of her incurable disease and is no longer... "bedridden"?
(to all; striking his breast)
It is I who should be committed to bed in a mental home! It is I who need a cure for being so slow to notice the tricks that were played on me in regard to the time of the murder.

For discussion: I see no reason why, in the SEPIA reconstruction of events leading to and culminating in the murder, we should not save expositional running-time by using a discreet FILM-TICKER (accelerated when required by continuity) at the central or right-hand base of frame; and MUSIC, which might otherwise be confined to opening and closing CREDITS, could be of dramatic value here.

ACTION RESUMES

213 SEPIA RECONSTRUCTION: THE TIME OF THE MURDER

We START with SOUND AND VISUAL EFFECTS of train running at high speed, and TICKER showing 9.40 over:

A. NEW ANGLE ON END OF SCENE 127: BEDDOES IN RATCHETT'S ROOM.

His duties performed, he stands with hands behind his back against the bolted communicating-door to Mrs Hubbard's room. We CLOSE to Beddoes' hands surreptitiously unbolting this door, during:

BEDDOES
Will there be anything more, sir?

WHIP-PAN to:

RATCHETT
There will. Tell Mr McQueen I want to see him - now.

CUT TO

---

(*) Mr Hubbard, presumably. Her first husband must have been Mr

213 Continued

B. MRS HUBBARD'S ROOM

TICKER continuing normally, as Mrs Hubbard (en negligée) gently slides back similar bolt on her side of the same communicating-door. TICKER accelerates to 9.50 over

QUICK DISSOLVE TO

C. RATCHETT, IN BED, LISTENING TO MCQUEEN

who completes reading draft of telegram behind the bed-table and out of Ratchett's eye line.

MCQUEEN
"... and six beakers stop only five repeat five beakers were delivered one repeat one badly chipped...
(emptying powder into glass of Valerian)
... which will be returned on receipt of replacement to my Paris address signed Ratchett."

The powder has dissolved invisibly in the glass, as we PULL BACK to:

D. 2-SHOT: RATCHETT (FG), MCQUEEN (BG)

RATCHETT
Okay, Hector.

CUT TO

E. POIROT, IN BED, WEARING MOUSTACHE PROTECTOR (SCENE 68)

He is overhearing:

RATCHETT'S VOICE (O.S.)
That's all.

MCQUEEN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Good night, Mr Ratchett.

CUT BACK TO:

F. RATCHETT'S ROOM (SEE SCENE 68)

RATCHETT
Good night, Hector.

213 Continued

F. (Cont)

McQueen, closing door behind him, is seen to leave. Ratchett rises from bed and (prior to cleaning teeth) lets down wash basin with a CLUNK! which

G. POIROT HEARS (SEE SCENE 68)

H. RATCHETT (NEW MATERIAL)

Teeth cleaned, he tips back wash-basin, drinks the glass of "spiked" Valerian and gets back into bed. Then, from the drawer of his bedside table, he extracts and (obviously) re-reads the contents of:

I. INSERT: A STRIP OF PAPER

On it is pencilled in capital letters written by different hands:

DAISY ARMSTRONG

Suddenly the letters blur.

CUT TO:

J. THE DRUG HITS RATCHETT

and he falls back in bed, the paper still held in his nerveless hand which drops to the floor. TICKER ACCELERATES over,

QUICK TIME-DISSOLVE TO

K. RATCHETT'S HAND STILL HOLDING MESSAGE

TICKER at 12.35, and moving normally. Abnormal is the stillness and total silence. (The train has just halted in the snowdrift.) We PULL UP and BACK to include... McQueen looking down - without at first seeing the hand holding the message - on Ratchett, mouth open in a drugged stupor. He takes Ratchett's pocket-watch from its wall-hook, moves its fingers forward to 1.15 (INSERT) and with a small, closed pen-knife cracks the glass of the watch which he inserts in Ratchett's pyjama-pocket. Then McQueen - the would-be actor - gives the loud, blood-chilling groan and cry, which wakes;

L. POIROT (CLIP FROM END OF SCENE 84)

PING! goes the bell. Poirot rises and peers out at:

213 Continued

M. FROM SCENE 85: PIERRE HURRYING DOWN CORRIDOR TOWARDS CAMERA

He taps, then knocks at Ratchett's door. As a second bell rings elsewhere (Princess Dragomiroff's):

N. RATCHETT'S ROOM MCQUEEN AND (DRUGGED) RATCHETT

TICKER AT 12.37.

MCQUEEN
(husky, like Ratchett)
Ce n'est rien. C'était un cauchemar.

McQueen hears (o.s.) Poirot re-shutting his own door and hastily prepares to leave, but suddenly spots the message on the floor under Ratchett's dangling hand; seizes the strip of paper; strikes a Wagon-Lit book-match from his pocket; then drops the burning message and the match into Ratchett's ash-tray, which already contains Ratchett's cigar-butt and one of the 'round' matches borrowed from Poirot. This, during:

PIERRE'S VOICE (O.S.)
Ah, bien, M Ratchett. May you now have pleasant dreams.

McQueen impatiently looks down on ashtray, where the message burns and smoulders. Then he exits through the now-accessible communicating-door into Mrs Hubbard's room. We CLOSE to ashtray, where the message chars and blackens into apparent indecipherability. TICKER STOPS and vanishes at whatever time it normally would - say 12.40.

CUT TO

214 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

We INTERCUT Occupants, during:

POIROT
At 1.15 came Mrs Hubbard's announcement that there was a man in her room, who had (for reasons which I dare not even guess) shed a button. Next morning the murder was discovered. Dr Constantine set the time of death anywhere between midnight and 2 a.m. I came to various conclusions. The clumsy cliché of the smashed watch registering 1.15

214 Continued

POIROT (Cont)
was designed intentionally to excite my disbelief. And since McQueen had over-emphatically told me that Ratchett spoke no languages, I was intentionally being manoeuvred into believing that Ratchett was already dead when the voice from his room cried out in French. In other words, I was being forced into the theory that the murder was committed at some time earlier than 1.15 - a period for which every passenger had an unshakeable alibi.

He approaches the passengers like a Prosecuting Attorney.

POIROT
But supposing that the crime was committed not earlier but later than 1.15... when all the distracting noises and incidents designed to confuse me had died down, and I had lapsed into sleep because the train was now silent and at peace.

He has been pacing, but now stands still as a statue.

POIROT
Silent, yes. At peace, no. By 2 o'clock the murder was afoot. Envisage it!

We CLOSE to BIG HEAD: PIERRE, and

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO

215 SEPIA RECONSTRUCTION: THE MURDER OF RATCHETT

His compartment remains in darkness until illuminated by a dim electric torch held by Pierre, who enters from Mrs Hubbard's communicating-door. He wears his conductor's uniform - and gloves. He pulls back the bedclothes to expose the sleeping victim's body and tiptoes to (Ratchett's) corridor-door which he locks and chains from inside. Then his torch lifts to the open communicating-door, and flickers a signal.

PIERRE
(whisper)
Come.

So begins the grisly procession of murderers who, one by one step from

215 Continued

Mrs Hubbard's room into the torchlight and are guided by the torch to Ratchett's bedside, where each delivers his or her stab with the cheap Oriental dagger that Mrs Hubbard will later "find" in her sponge-bag. Each stab is masked, as each murderer leans over the bedside to deliver it. Each murderer, male or female, wears dressing-gowned night-attire with - eerie touch! - gloves. And since this is a ritual murder, each has a message to whisper or murmur to the victim before returning through Mrs Hubbard's door to make way for a successor. In the following order:

A. ARBUTHNOT, the professional officer. No qualms. As he strongly and accurately stabs:

ARBUTHNOT
(straightening; with stiff formality)
In memory of Colonel Armstrong - a great soldier - and an even greater friend.

He salutes... and hands dagger-hilt to:

B. MARY DEBENHAM, entering calm and collected.

MARY
And for Mrs. Armstrong. They took me into their home -
(stabbing)
- and their hearts.

C. GRETA OHLSSON, frightened but determined. As she hesitates over the body:

GRETA
For their Daisy, and -
(stabbing)
- mine.

D. MRS. HUBBARD - every inch the tragic actress. If anyone knows how to stab spectacularly, she does. She grasps the dagger-hilt in both gloved hands and holds it high above her head. Then, in the low, soft voice that has thrilled thousands:

MRS HUBBARD
For my daughter and my little grand-daughter.

The dagger plunges.

215 Continued

E. COUNTESS ANDRENYI, who for the first time is heard speaking in her native American accent. As she stabs:

COUNTESS
For my sister and my little niece.

F. COUNT ANDRENYI, receiving the dagger in his right hand and holding his wife's hand with his left.

COUNT
(stabbing)
Cassetti! For the grief you brought to my beloved wife.

G. FOSCARELLI - for once, not beaming.

FOSCARELLI
Villaccio!

He stabs with relish, and spits on the body.

H. THE PRINCESS - her left hand on her stick, her right distastefully holding a small cambric handkerchief over nose and mouth, enters with Hildegarde who holds the dagger... and stabs.

HILDEGARDE
Schweinhund!

She passes the dagger to the Princess, whose frail hand can scarcely hold it. Hidegarde grasps the Princess's right wrist and guides the dagger to its target... as the Princess's handkerchief inadvertently falls.

PRINCESS
For my darling god-daughter.

I. MCQUEEN, steeling himself to stab.

MCQUEEN
For Mother Armstrong. From Hector.

J. BEDDOES - carrying the dagger-hilt delicately between finger and thumb, as though he were going to set it on a carving-table.

BEDDOES
For my gentleman.

There is nothing delicate about his stab. He might be carving tough mutton.

215 Continued

K. HARDMAN. The circle of torchlight approaches and widens, as he stabs, on the last word of:

HARDMAN
To Paulette, with my love...

L. PIERRE, entering SHOT, takes the dagger from Hardman's hand to plunge it in the body.

PIERRE
(quietly crying)
... and with mine. God rest the soul of my dear, dead daughter.

He pulls the bedclothes back over the corpse's chest; and is professionally smoothing, tidying and tucking them in, as we

CUT TO

216 DINING CAR (COLOUR)

POIROT
(still standing)
I repeat: a repulsive murderer has himself been repulsively (and perhaps deservedly) murdered.

We PAN the drawn, expressionless faces of the participants back to POIROT, during:

POIROT
But in which of the two ways I suggested? In the simpler way by the Mafioso, who boarded the train disguised in the uniform of a Wagon-Lit conductor - which involves only the one question: "Did such a man exist?" Or in the more complex way that I have just outlined - which involves many questions and, of course...
(sitting down amiably beside Bianchi)
... considerable scandal.
(Bianchi nods sagely)
Signor Bianchi, it is for you, as the Director of the Line, to choose the solution we shall offer to the police at Brod. I confess I am in two minds... though I suspect that the police at Brod would prefer the simplicity of the first solution.

216 Continued

QUICK CUTS of some Passengers' strained faces. Then:

BIANCHI
I profoundly agree.

More QUICK CUTS of remaining Passengers and Pierre, during:

BIANCHI
We have the uniform to show the Police. And if we have the uniform, there must have been a man in it. I elect for the First Solution.

CUT TO

217 FULL SHOT: PASSENGERS AND PIERRE

still motionless for the splittest of split seconds. Then: CLANK!

The train jerks into sudden movement and the Passengers lurch into sudden... relaxation.

POIROT
We are starting again.

Mrs Hubbard looks at him with tears in her eyes. Gently the Countess Andrenyi lays a hand as light as a leaf on the shoulder of her mother, who holds it there.

MRS HUBBARD
(meaning something quite different)
Yes. We are starting again.

Arbuthnot and Mary dare only to look at each other with love, as the whistle shrills and the train slowly gathers speed.

BIANCHI
Pierre! Champagne for the passengers!

CUT TO

218 EXT. CARRIAGES CLANKING PAST CAMERA...

... to unmask WORKING PARTY (with picks and shovels) who have cleared the railway-line of snow. They wave to:

219 TIGHT SHOT: DRIVER IN CABIN WAVES BACK.

220 FROM DRIVER'S POV: WORKING PARTY RECEDING.

221 TRAIN ACCELERATING...

... until, as it achieves maximum speed, we

CUT TO

222 INT. DINING CAR - CHAMPAGNE CORK EXPLODING

We PULL BACK to Chief Attendant pouring champagne into Bianchi's glass and shifting to adjacent glass over which Poirot firmly places the palm of his hand.

BIANCHI
(to Poirot)
You will not join us?

POIROT
No. I must wrestle with my report...
and my conscience.

We FOLLOW him into the Wagon-Lit corridor, down which his lonely figure recedes. For the last time we hear the train's shrill whistle, as its entry into a tunnel produces:

223 A BLACKOUT

over which, to the redoubled clangour of the wheels, we

ROLL-UP END CREDITS

By the time these have been itemised, the noise of the train has receded into silence.

THE END